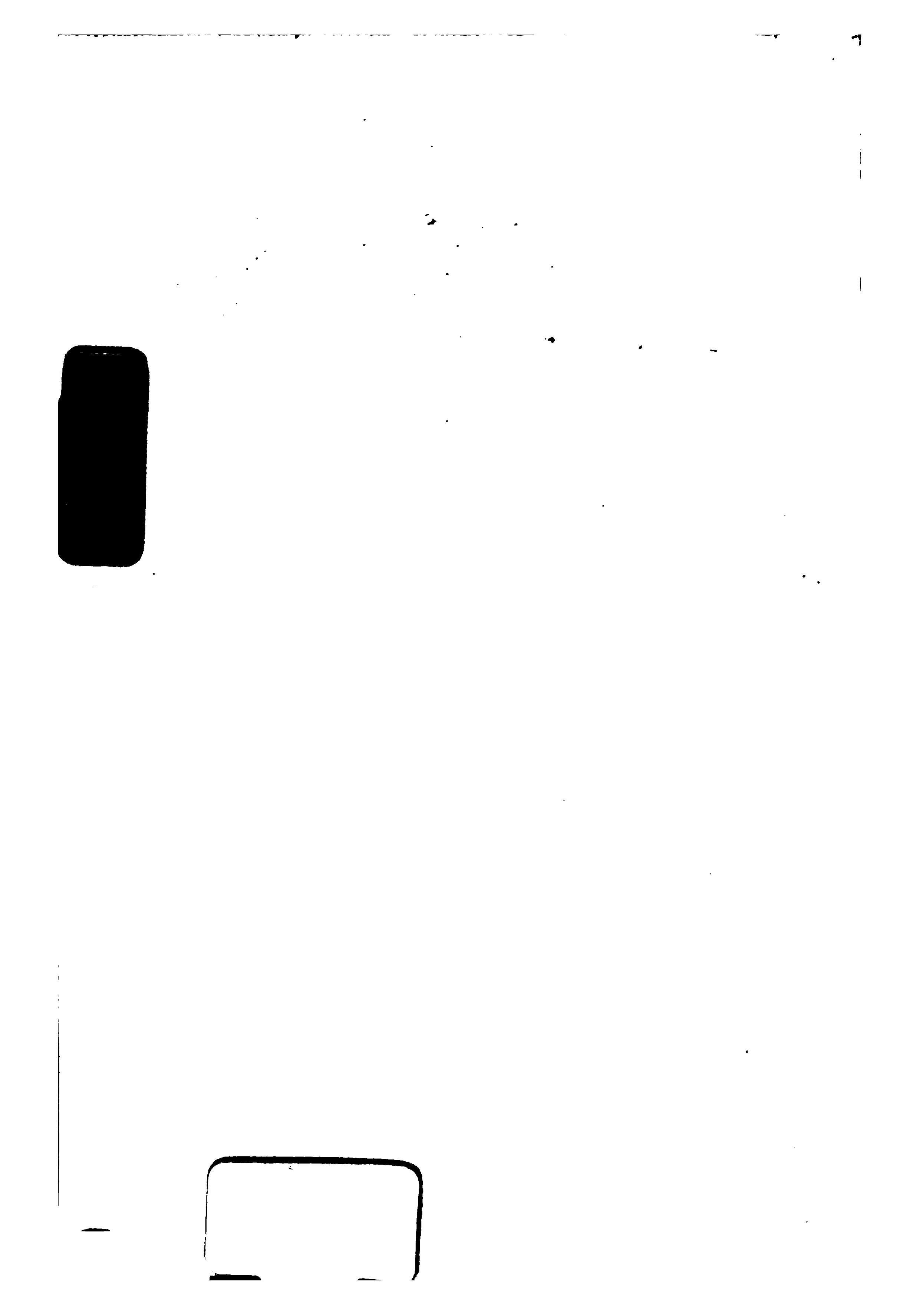


Wallace

MYP

STALKS ABROAD


Walker & Boutall Ph. Sc.

East African Game.

STALKS ABROAD

BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE SPORT OBTAINED DURING A TWO YEARS' TOUR OF THE WORLD. BY HAROLD FRANK WALLACE, F.Z.S.

WITH A FRONTISPIECE, NINE FULL-PAGE AND EIGHTEEN HALF-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR AND FIFTY-SIX PHOTOGRAPHS

"Send your way lies clear before you when the old
Spring fret comes o'er you,
And the Red Gods call for you."

RUDYARD KIPLING

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA
1908

TO

THE MEMORY OF

EDWARD JAMES WALLACE

THIS RECORD OF A

DREAM ACCOMPLISHED TOO LATE

IS DEDICATED BY

HIS SORROWING SON

Society; Mr. T. E. Donne; Mr. E. Hardcastle; Mr. Leonard Tripp; Mr. H. E. Hodgkinson; Mr. C. W. G. Morris; Mr. Arthur Hawley, and Mr. H. B. Tate, both for information and photographs with which they have kindly supplied me.

Last, but not least, I must thank Mr. J. G. Millais, who has given me the benefit of his valuable criticism and advice.

The later pages have been completed under the sense of a heavy personal loss. He for whom they were chiefly penned, and whose delight lay in reading books of travel, after a life of unselfishness and devotion to duty has answered to the call of a Greater than the Red Gods. In the shadow of the Great Glen he lies, where he longed to be, facing toward the purple hills he loved so well. The scent of the pines mingles with the soft whisper of the birches and the salt tang of the firth above his resting-place, and over all there is a grateful peace. The heather was never so purple nor the woods so green as this year; yet a shadow lay about them, for I knew that I should never hear his cheery voice again. What would have pleased him may perhaps prove of interest to others; it is in that hope that I have finished this book.

H. FRANK WALLACE.

BEARNOCK, GLEN URQUHART,
October 1908.

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STALKS ABROAD

CHAPTER I

THE YELLOWSTONE PARK

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE PRONGHORN ANTELOPE

WHEN, as a small, shy, bespectacled boy at Eton, tiring occasionally of the paths of learning, which in this particular case led, or were supposed to lead, to a thorough knowledge of the French language, I would beguile the time by surreptitiously perusing the short paragraphs contained in my exercise book.

There was one whose stilted language never failed to conjure up before my youthful mind glorious visions of the might-have-been. Headed "The Yellowstone Park," it read as follows: "Within its confines roam great herds of game, living amicably together, undisturbed by man. Here one may still see the shaggy bison; vast herds of wapiti; bands of antelope; mountain sheep; bears; and a host of other strange creatures. Knowing that they are safe they allow the visitor to approach within a few yards of them." That was nearly all, but it was enough for me. In thought I left the dingy classroom and wandered free as air over those vast mountain ranges,

watching the sunlit glades for the lordly wapiti, coursing the plains after antelope, or climbing dizzy heights for bighorn. I longed, oh how I longed! to take an active part in all the glorious pursuits which my mind conceived, never dreaming that one day I should indeed fulfil my desires. From fancies such as these I would be aroused by the voice of the long-suffering M. B—— protesting that "he, M. B—— de Paree, would not be bamboozle by ze leetle English fourth form caad," that "Wallass would proceed to write out the lesson word for word three times" ("O sir!" from Wallass), concluding his remarks with the plaintive and somewhat paradoxical statement, "Ven I türn my back, you laff in my faice!"

Others perhaps, as I did, may wonder what that huge playground of the American people is like, and though if they expect scientific explanations of the formation of geysers or the elaborate colouring of the Grand Canyon they will be disappointed, a few notes on the *fauna* to be found there may prove of interest.

The Park is about 60 miles long by 50 miles wide, with an average elevation of 7500 feet. It was established by the Government as a National Park in 1872, and though I suppose that the geysers and other natural malformations of nature, if I may so term them, are the principal attractions for tourists, I went there chiefly in the hope of seeing the larger mammals of North America



The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone

under unique conditions. I confess that I was disappointed. The animals are there all right, but it is, practically speaking, hopeless, when one's time is limited, to attempt to see much of them in August and September. The best season would undoubtedly be the winter, but it would be necessary to obtain special permission to visit the Park then. It is possible to stay at the Mammoth Hot Springs for a few weeks after the season closes (about the third week in September) or before it commences (1st June); and this latter would be the better of the two, as the animals would not have gone back to the hills after wintering in the valleys.

Nearly every species of American game is represented, with the exception of the Rocky Mountain goat, the caribou, and the musk-ox. Wapiti (or, as they are universally misnamed in America, elk) are the most plentiful, though owing to the nature of the ground they do not winter here but go south, through the timber reserve, into the Jackson's Hole country. I only saw one unenclosed wapiti all the time I was in the Park, and that was a two-year-old bull in the Hayden Valley.

The first animals which we came across were a little bunch of antelope feeding close to the entrance of the Park at Gardiner. Although very interested in seeing them, I did not at the time pay them the attention I found out afterwards they deserved; for the pronghorn is one of the most sporting little beasts alive, and his head a trophy of which any

hunter may be proud; however, I shall have something to say about him at the end of the present chapter.

Early in the season mountain sheep may be seen quite close to the road at this point, but they were all away up on Mount Washburn during our stay, and though we rode up the mountain we never saw them.

The herd of bison at the Mammoth Hot Springs, under the care of Buffalo Jones, is interesting from many points of view.

Buffalo Jones and his brother imported the original eighteen animals from Texas; they are doing well and have now increased in numbers to fifty-seven. There are two fine old bulls in the herd. We had rather an amusing adventure with one of them. I was anxious to get a photograph of some wapiti which were in the bison enclosure, and Jones said the best chance would be when the bison were being fed, about three o'clock, and the wapiti down near a little pool out of sight of the herd. As soon, therefore, as the bison, among them the biggest bull, began to dawdle up at feeding time, Burton and I slipped through the wires, out of their sight, and cautiously approached the pool. As we drew near, sure enough we saw a wapiti cow standing near the pool a couple of hundred yards off. Simultaneously we also spotted a dark mass lying underneath a dead tree about the same distance to our left. A second glance was unnecessary. It was the other old bull—the redoubtable "Teddy"

himself—taking his afternoon siesta. I snapped him with a telephoto lens, but the photograph was not sharp. Then as he got ponderously on to his thick hairy legs and turned a shaggy front in our direction we made a bolt for the fence, a quarter of a mile or so distant, and left the wapiti to look after themselves. Jones told us afterwards that our haste was unnecessary, as the veteran had a game leg, but we were not taking any chances.

The destruction of so fine an animal as the American bison makes pitiable reading; but however much we may deplore their extermination we cannot but see that it was unavoidable. The land covered in the early part of the nineteenth century by their vast herds, whose primitive numbers are estimated by some authorities as 50,000,000, and by others at double that figure, was also the land best adapted for cultivation and the land most needed by an advancing civilisation. It was the same old story which is being repeated even in our own day in those parts of the world which the all-conquering white is engaged in occupying. Natural conditions had to give way to artificial. Those vast herds have shrunk now to a miserable 1500 or 1600 individuals which linger on in private preserves and zoological gardens. The only animals still existing in their natural state are the small herd, seldom seen, which live in the thick timber near the Yellowstone Lake; and the herd of wood bison which hide themselves in the woods and plains of Athabasca. Caught when young

the wild bison thrives in captivity, and a Society has been formed called "The American Bison Society," for the permanent preservation and increase of the American bison. There seems to be no reason why their undertaking should not succeed.

Attempts have been, and are being made, with more or less success, to cross bison with common cattle; the hybrid being known as a "catalo." They are very hardy and can live where ordinary cattle would starve, besides producing very superior hides.

Jones and his brother, as I have said, caught the progenitors of the Mammoth Hot Springs herd in Texas. They were all roped as calves; for it was found that when a two-year-old beast was captured he invariably died in a short time, Jones said of a broken heart.

These two men also supplied the Duke of Bedford at Woburn with seven bison in 1896. In spite of eleven deaths they have increased to twenty-five in ten years.

The bison furnishes a very interesting illustration, as supplied to me by an old hunter, of the natural adaptation of an animal to suit its surroundings. It exemplifies, too, the rapidity with which such a change may take place.

The straggling remnants of the bison which were left in the late seventies and early eighties had, so my informant said, changed noticeably from their original prototypes. The plains bison was a thick-



Some Inhabitants of the Yellowstone Park

set heavy beast, wonderfully quick and active for his size, but not adapted for speed. This at first was not necessary; but with the advent of hunters mounted on fast horses the case altered and the bison of which I am speaking were longer in the leg and slighter in the body, so that they could run faster and thus escape the danger which threatened them. There is a big bull bison on Buffalo Island in Lake Yellowstone, supposed to be the largest in existence, for whom when dead his owner told me he had been offered $1600 (£320). He is a savage old beast and killed four cows before his evil deeds were discovered. He now lives alone in solitary grandeur, whilst the heads of his victims are exposed for sale in a local store at $300 apiece. Later on, when hunting antelope on the plains, I saw hundreds of shallow depressions in the ground; sometimes a few isolated ones, sometimes dozens close together. Here they were but a few inches in depth; there as much as a foot. At first I could not imagine what they were. Then it dawned on me. They were the old buffalo wallows rubbed bare generations ago when their makers wanted a dust bath. How has their glory departed!

By far the most amusing animals in the Park are the bears. They frequent the garbage heaps of nearly every hotel, and one evening at the Grand Canyon there were twenty-three silver tips enjoying their dinner at once. I went up as soon as I heard of their party, but by the time I reached the scene of

the debauch, half of them had disappeared to fulfil after-dinner engagements elsewhere.

At one time the tourists were allowed to feed these animals, and the hotel employés made great pets of them. This practice, however, was very wisely put a stop to, as sooner or later a serious accident would be bound to have occurred.

One amusing incident happened which might have had a tragic ending, also whilst we were at the Canyon. A large female silver tip in the neighbourhood, frenzied at the loss of her cubs, or for some other reason, suddenly ran amuck. She started operations by robbing a lumber camp. Some unfortunate female domestics, whom she scared out of their wits, were her next victims. She then sighted two lumbermen one evening and bore down on them with many growls. They fled to a fir tree with the bear close behind. The tree was small and the branches slender, but one of the men found a refuge half-way up the trunk. The bear, thinking no doubt that its hindmost victim would be unable to find a seat, as he swung himself into safety thoughtfully deprived him of that portion of his clothing of which he would least stand in need. Thoroughly pleased with her latest exploit she proceeded to romp about the foot of the tree uttering horrible noises until the corporal of the troop of U.S. cavalry stationed close by came to the rescue. His horse, a noted bear-fighter, went straight for the beast, while he emptied four barrels of his six-shooter at it at close

quarters. The bear, at that, disappeared into the woods, and though subsequently there were various false alarms she had not been seen again when we left the Park. Late one night, when we were staying at "Old Faithful" Inn, I got the guide to turn the searchlight on to a garbage heap. There we saw a fat little black bear, alone and unmolested by tourists, having the time of his life. As we looked, however, a great dark mass loomed up out of the shadows, and the next instant the youngster was scuttling away as fast as his legs would carry him before the advent of an enormous silver tip who proceeded to take entire charge of the proceedings. We were fully six hundred yards off, but, as dazzled by the strong light he turned his head in our direction, we could plainly see his little piglike eyes flashing with the brilliancy of a couple of enormous emeralds. Poor little Johnnie bear was "dimly to be descried" in the gloom of the fir wood, sitting upright on his little haunches waiting until the coast was clear before he dared venture forth to complete his meal.

Sutton, one of the troopers, told me that these animals will run from anything red, and that if a lady in a red dress appeared near a garbage heap, any bears who happened to be there would bolt like rabbits.

The horses in the Park seemed to have no fear of the bears at all. I saw a large black bear walk within ten yards of a dozen of them, and beyond

raising their heads they paid no attention to him at all.

I spent one most amusing afternoon trying to photograph some black bears, and though I only got one good result out of about a dozen, I felt more than repaid. Sutton was with us. He was a most intelligent observer and took great interest in the animals. I hoped to get some good photographs of live bears and sheep which he had taken, but part of Fort Yellowstone was destroyed by fire, and in it all his negatives and pictures, so I had to go without.

At first there was nothing to be seen in the wood. We spotted the wrong end of one black bear in the distance, but he very rapidly vanished. About half a mile farther on we discovered another, and started to surround him. On getting closer, the whole of the little glade in which we had disturbed him seemed literally alive with bears. There must have been at least seven, scuttling over the fallen timber like enormous black beetles. Two got up trees in their first fright, but one of these, as I tried to get closer, slid to the ground and made off. Burton, however, succeeded in chasing the other to the top of a fir by a well-directed volley of fir cones and sticks. There he stayed in a very bad temper, and spat and growled most indignantly whilst we sat round the bottom of the tree and made preparations to snap him. It was then that we made the discovery that all our films



Black Bear up a Tree



Dick Rock, near Henry's Lake, Idaho

He was killed by the bison on which he is sitting half-an-hour after the photograph was taken.

but one had been used! Burton rose nobly to the occasion, and volunteered to return for more films if we would keep the bear treed. This we did, and that unfortunate beast must have spent one of the most trying afternoons of his life judging by his expression. He kept continually changing his position as far as his limited quarters allowed, and hid his face behind the trunk, just like a child who is unwilling to be photographed. Then he peered round the corner with one eye to see if we were still looking, and finding that we were, opened his mouth, elongated his tongue, and sighed deeply. Finally he put his head on his arm and looked at us as much as to say, "Do for goodness' sake go away and let me get down from this beastly tree; I can't imagine what pleasure it gives you to keep me up here in this uncomfy position all the afternoon!" Whilst we were watching him another bear came up within ten yards of us, and lay down behind a log without detecting our presence. He was just below the treed bear, but so far as I could detect they seemed to take no notice of each other. After about half-an-hour Burton came back with the films, and the newcomer hearing him moved off before we could take his picture. In ten minutes or so our original friend's troubles came to an end, but the light was bad and our efforts mostly failures. That same evening I saw a very fine mule deer stag, with, at least, seventeen points. They are graceful animals, about the size of a fallow

deer, and in colour rather like a roe in his winter coat.

A couple of days later a bear with an explorative bent decided to see what the bottom of the Grand Canyon was like; but, as many another before him, he found the downward road the easier, and had to spend twenty-four hours meditating on his humiliating position before being able to regain his original status.

Though I came across but few wapiti myself in the Park, it was here that old Yarnall, of whom I shall speak again, noticed a curious incident. He was camped in Hayden Valley, a favourite place for these animals, and one evening, about a mile distant saw fifteen full-grown bulls. He watched them for some time and noticed that they were all in the velvet. The next morning they were still there, but six of the biggest bulls had lost their velvet, and it was the white flashing horns which first caught his eye. Curiosity prompting him, he rode over to the spot where they had been standing, but no trace of any velvet could he find, and he declares that they must have eaten it. To support this statement he instanced the case of a black-tail buck which a friend of his kept in confinement. He too got rid of his velvet one night, and not a strip of it was discovered in the small paddock where he lived. Unless he really did eat it, its disappearance is something of a mystery. Like most tame deer he finally turned savage and had to be killed.

I have already alluded to the pronghorn. After leaving the Park, we fitted out at Jackson's Hole and hunted wapiti. Then, having no time to go after mountain sheep, we went in pursuit of antelope.

Though, with the exception of the Rocky Mountain goat, he bequeaths to his slayer the least imposing trophy of any of the big game of North America, he is such a fine little animal, and so well able to take the best possible care of himself, that he deserves a foremost place in a list of beasts of the chase, and holds a prominent position in the affections of any sportsman who has hunted him. This is an entirely different matter to the pursuit of the wapiti, and in my opinion a vastly superior form of sport.

How I enjoyed those days with old Yarnall! Dear old chap! I can see him now in his overalls and blue jumper; a 28·35 Winchester hitched under his saddle flap; a cartridge belt, from which was suspended a huge butcher's knife, around his waist; his saddle hung with a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends, including an axe, a haunch of meat, and a lariat, looking in all like a reincarnation of the White Knight as he rode through the wood with Alice. He was always singing of some lady too, and seemed to have stated hours for their coming. Nancy was my favourite; for, as he saddled the horses after an early breakfast, he would enlarge upon her charms ere we rode out across the plain

in the hope of some big buck. And how I loved those rides! What stories he told me of the days when he was an Indian scout, when the bison were in such numbers, that, in his own words, "the face of the earth moved." He and his type, like the bison of whom he loved to talk, are nearly gone. In a few short years there will be none left to charm camp-fire audiences with their simply-told tales of stirring scenes, long since buried in the grey mists of the advancing years. Yet those yarns as he told them were vivid enough! Of Kit Carson and the arrow which brought him to his death; of Buffalo Bill and the wager which gave him his name; of Jim Beckwith and his hundred mile race for life, accomplished between sunrise and sunset; of Custer and that wound in the temple which some say no Indian gave; of Drannan, the boy-scout; and many another.

The exploit of which he was most proud occurred on 3rd July 1874. He was out scouting with his party of troops, who had run short of meat. There were Indians close by and hunting was forbidden. At last one morning a dark speck appeared on the distant horizon, which, as it came nearer, resolved itself into a big buffalo bull. Old Yarnall got leave to kill it provided he made no noise. Borrowing an Indian's bow and arrow he waited until the bull was near the camp, then riding out, killed it with a single arrow through the heart. This feat he declared had never been performed by any other

white man, and was rare even among the Indians themselves.

Though short, almost squat, his deep chest and broad shoulders told of enormous strength as a young man; and even now, with three-score years on the debit side of the ledger, he is one whom few would care to tackle. He had wonderful sight, and it was his boast that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he saw the game before it had seen him. Had it been otherwise I should never have got my big buck, for the pronghorn antelope is one of the most sharp-sighted animals living. He is absolutely thoroughbred from start to finish; and his sight little short of marvellous. If once a suspicious object comes within his field of vision, unlike a deer, he takes no chances on a supposititious coyote; but when there is any doubt about the matter, takes the benefit and removes both it and himself to a safe distance before stopping to consider. He is the swiftest animal on the continent—a racehorse alone excepted. As regards his power of scent I was unable to satisfy myself. Hardly as good as that of the deer, it is superior to that of the goat, with which I just now compared him, On one occasion a big bunch of antelope allowed me to approach within a hundred and twenty yards of them with the wind directly behind me, though of course an isolated instance of this kind proves nothing.

Formerly he had the reputation of being a very

inquisitive little beast, and one hears numerous tales of this trait in his character proving his undoing, either through the prosaic medium of a piece of red flannel, or a hat waved on the end of a rifle barrel. Indeed, I have been told of old hunters who wore shirts of a scarlet hue for the express delectation of so curious a beast. Advancing civilisation has, however, cured him of any tendencies in this direction; he found he had to pay too heavy a price for setting his mind at ease. His greatest safeguard lies in his power of vision, which is certainly equal if not superior to so keen-sighted an animal as the mountain sheep. I have seen the latter lay aside for the nonce his habitual watchfulness; but never an antelope that was not on the alert and ready to fly at a moment's notice.

A full-grown buck will stand about 37 inches at the shoulder and can be easily distinguished from the females and smaller bucks by the dark line of hair across the forehead. This, with the patch under each ear and his black horns and eyes, gives him the appearance of having a very dark head. The illusion is heightened by a comparison with the light tones which prevail elsewhere. When an antelope faces you the noticeable features about him are the large prominent eyes, which are his most striking characteristic, and can be seen at a distance of two hundred yards; his black nose; the black tips to his ears; the white bands on his neck, and white underparts.

It is an extremely difficult matter for a novice at antelope hunting to spot the game, either when there is no sun, or when the sun is at their backs. Their conspicuous colouring blends with the light and shadow of the sage, where they are chiefly to be found, in a most extraordinary manner. I watched a small buck one evening standing against a background of trees some hundred yards or so distant. Even though I knew his exact position I had continually to put my glass to my eyes to make sure that he was still there.

The rump is covered with fine white hairs. The outermost ones, four or five inches in length, can be erected at will; at the base of these is a kind of oily secretion having a strong musky odour. It serves for purposes of communication, in the same manner as do the glands on the legs of a deer.

During the rutting season, which begins about the beginning of October, one may find here and there in little openings among the sage bush, flat dusty patches, heavily scored with the buck's sharp little hoofs. Here his lovesick passions break loose, though I have never seen one thrashing a bush with his horns as a stag will do. The bucks are determined fighters, and Williams, one of our guides, told me that the clash of their horns could be heard at a great distance.

When alarmed, they utter a kind of snort which can be heard four or five hundred yards off on a still day. I have also heard does make a curious

noise, between a squeak and a whistle; though whether it was a signal of alarm to the band or a summons to their own particular offspring I was never able to determine.

They always make for the open when frightened, and are usually led by an old doe. The bucks carry their heads in a peculiar manner; not held back like a deer's, but rather lurching forward.

They are subject to sudden impulses and will start off at their best pace for no apparent reason, and stop as abruptly. A large band will sometimes indulge in a game of general post; and a very pretty sight it is. I once saw fifteen or twenty antelope, led by a big buck which I had, alas! missed, stop within a quarter of a mile of the place from which I had fired at them, and incidentally of our camp, and chase each other for a good twenty minutes. The big buck finally chased a smaller one right down the ridge which they had just left, and it was only the failing light which prevented my getting another shot. When walking slowly they have a somewhat stilted appearance, which entirely vanishes as they reach a gallop. The latter is beautifully easy and regular, carrying them over the ground at a great pace.

The bucks travel in the early mornings and late evenings when searching for the does, and keep quiet during the daytime. Like all animals they are more easily approached in the small hours than at any other time.



In the Cool of the Day



Mule Deer

The majority of Western hunters, like many men of their class of all nationalities, are ignorant of any facts which do not occur beneath their very noses. Questions on a subject which they had not troubled to probe were dismissed in the all-embracing formula "I don't know!" Only two of those whom I met had any definite answer as to whether or no the bucks shed their horns, and on many other matters of a like nature they were hopelessly at sea. Old Yarnall was a pleasant change, though neither he nor another good hunter could tell me the exact time of year at which they shed. He inclined to the belief that they dropped about March, and was very firm on the point that they did not shed annually, but, in his opinion, once every second year. Dr. Canfield of Monterey declared as early as 1858 that they shed annually: the old bucks in October and the young ones earlier in the year. But few shed horns are found, for they rapidly disintegrate in the hot sun and are gnawed by coyotes and other beasts.

Yarnall told me that he once shot a buck, and taking the horns to pull him over on to his side for skinning, was surprised to find himself holding the two loose horns in his hands. They were just ready to fall off, and his grasp had detached them from the skull. The new horns which had formed beneath the cast-off shell were more or less soft, black and shiny to look at, and covered with short hairs something like the velvet which is found on the newly

grown antlers of a stag. In his opinion the young horns of an antelope are always more or less smooth; the beautiful rough excrescences which add so much to the appearance of a trophy forming later. He added that the old horns on a buck got very brown in the spring and never regained their colour; consequently the black horns were always new. Whether this theory is correct I cannot say. Burton killed a fine buck with ivory-tipped horns, which are much prized in the States. The tip of each horn is quite white for a quarter of an inch or so, and if the old man's theory is correct, their infrequent appearance may be accounted for on the supposition that they are worn away on any but very new horns. Malformed heads are occasionally met with, the most usual, to employ a contradiction in terms, being "droopers." The horns in heads of this sort droop outwards and are usually caused by the core from which the horn springs being damaged. I have, however, heard of heads where the horns took an outward curve above the guard. Old does are not infrequently found to have little nubbins of horns, but they seldom exceed three or four inches in length.

Antelope trails always follow rising ground in order that the travellers may have a clear view of the surrounding country. It was while we jogged along a trail of this kind one beautiful warm October day, talking quietly in guarded tones, that Yarnall suddenly reined in his pony, crying "Back, quick!

There's a good buck coming." I jumped off Snips, the same little horse I rode when hunting wapiti, and of whom I got very fond, at the same time pulling my rifle out of its scabbard. Then we dropped our reins on to the ground, and cautiously advanced to the edge of the rise. There was the buck, looking very smart and dapper, but withal somewhat fairy-like as the sun glowed on his light coat, crossing the dip below us. It was not a good chance, so we watched him walk slowly over the opposite knoll and out of sight. He was but little alarmed, and though as a doe and her fawns suddenly sprang from their hiding-place amongst the sage and trotted off we had some qualms, they were unnecessary. "He'll be down soon!" said Yarnall, "and then we've got him." His optimism was contagious, and as I remounted Snips the world seemed a very good place to be in. We followed on slowly. Presently the old man left his pony, the reins trailing on the ground, and crept forward to the top of the ridge. At first he saw nothing; then very, very slowly he sank down on his knees, and by the time his glass was out, I knelt beside him with something of my excitement showing in my face. "It's all right," he whispered reassuringly. "There he is!" There he was too; but a terribly long way off it seemed to me. Yarnall gave a hasty comprehensive glance around, but the buck had seen us and there was no help for it. "You must take him as he is," he murmured. "It's

two hundred and fifty." I was glad of his reminder, for in that country distances, as well as appearances, are terribly deceptive. It was my turn to look around then, but it was no good. The sage bush was high and would have hidden me, had I knelt, so I prepared to take him "off the shoulder." It is the kind of shot I funk at the best of times, and now the little white dot on which my eye was fixed seemed to wiggle in all directions but that of the buck. At last I could stand it no longer and pressed the trigger. At the sound, there came a thudding smack which rejoiced my heart, and sent the old gentleman into a paroxysm of delight. Flinging out his arms, he gave me a great hug which nearly cracked my ribs, and fairly danced for joy. "He's yours! He's yours!" he kept on saying and hugged me yet again. After his first wild plunge, the buck had galloped past us out of sight, and when I reminded Yarnall of a trite and somewhat irritating proverb he sobered down a bit.

We walked quickly down to the trail, a thin line among the grey green bushes, worn bare by countless little feet. There were his tracks and a few specks of blood, but the buck himself was nowhere to be seen. There was only one direction in which he could have gone without our seeing him, and that was down a small draw on our left. We rode slowly down this draw, but there was no sight of the buck and I began to feel rather nervous.

Not so my companion, dear old optimist that he was. "He's yours all right! We'll have him yet!" he kept repeating. The little dimpling tracks and scarlet specks had ceased, so turning our horses we rode back. Then, joy of joys! Yarnall, who was in front, cried suddenly, "Here he is—dead!" and flung himself off his pony. There he was indeed, stone dead and his head a beauty. A trifle over a foot in length, his beautiful black rough horns had brought unwelcome attentions on him from others besides myself; though I for the nonce was the one favoured by the gods. A deep flesh wound gaped in his flank, whilst a bullet from some small-bore had cut its way through one foreleg and badly torn the other. My shot had broken him all to pieces internally, and his vitality must have been enormous to have carried him the three hundred yards which he had covered before dropping.

Of all my sport in Wyoming, that is the day which recurs most often to my mind. I think of my big buck as I first saw him, and of how we came on him over that little knoll; of the other smaller antelope which I got an hour or so later; of our ride home in the blaze of the noonday sun, our saddles strung with heads, haunches, rifles; of my old White Knight and his tales, and I wonder when I shall have another like it.

The pronghorn, like nearly every other species of wild game, is growing scarcer with the advancing years. Not so long ago their numbers rivalled those

of the domestic sheep, which has now taken their heritage for his own. A little before that three thousand head could have been counted in one band. Now it is all changed. Their thousands have given place to tens and the reason is not far to seek. Increasing cultivation; restricted range; railways; scarcity of food. It is the same old story; but what can be done? A rapacious, careless, and all-embracing civilisation callously answers, "Nothing!"



The Mail from St. Anthony to Jackson's Hole



Pile of Wapiti Horns outside a Western Ranch

CHAPTER II

BEYOND THE TETONS

SOME ACCOUNT OF WAPITI HUNTING IN WYOMING

To any one who has regarded the great continent of North America from the point of view of a hunting-ground, rather than a wholesale producer of canned meat and pretty girls, the name of Jackson's Hole is familiar.

It lies there in North-western Wyoming out beyond the sharp-toothed Tetons, a vast hollow, containing within its mountain walls, on whose slopes great gloomy pine forests alternate with the lighter groves of quaking asp, a scattered remnant of the vast herds of game which, like the Indians who pursued them, have vanished into the happy hunting-grounds beyond the distant hills.

Still you may find on its highest tops a few roaming bands of bighorn; deer, wapiti, and bear move about the woodland glades, and on the sage-covered plains the pronghorn antelope proves to one how feeble a safety valve is the English language.

Ranches lie scattered here and there, the great green meadows which surround them a tribute to the energy and perseverance of some western farmer. In place of the bison, droves of sleek, mild-eyed Here-

fords graze about the plains, though the whitening skulls and sun-cracked horns of the former remind one that it is a change which has been effected within a short thirty years.

This Jackson's Hole district is, I should say, at the present time the largest game-producing area within the United States, though whether it will be possible to make the same remark in another twenty, or even ten years, is extremely doubtful.

The Wyoming game laws are good; but the range of the wapiti and antelope, restricted naturally by the lie of the country and climatic conditions, artificially by the encroaching ranchmen, is insufficient for the number of animals which are compelled to find a living on it. A very large number of wapiti spend the summer months in the great national preserve of the Yellowstone Park. The ground there is unsuitable for wintering, and as summer wanes they find their way down south through the game reservation which has been recently made, to Jackson's Hole.

It is estimated that at least fifteen thousand head of wapiti have wintered there annually of late years, and the feed is quite insufficient to support so large a number of beasts. Indeed, although it is a somewhat bold statement to make, I believe that a couple of really bad winters would relegate them to the unenviable position of the bison.

There is one factor, however, in the disappearance of the wapiti, hardly realised by European sportsmen, for which the legislature is very much to blame. I



The Past—



—and the Present

refer to the detestable and unsportsmanlike practice of tusk-hunting. To explain, I must go back a little. When I first landed in the United States, I noticed that a large number of persons wore small badges on their coats framing the mystic letters B.P.O.E., and either a tiny metal wapiti's head, or a tooth heavily mounted in gold hanging from their watch chains. In the innocence of my heart I fondly imagined that these teeth were trophies of their skill as hunters, but on inquiry learned two things; that B.P.O.E. denoted Benevolent Protective (save the mark!) Order of Elks, not Best People On Earth; and that very high prices were paid for these teeth, so much as $300 (£60) being sometimes given for a perfect pair, whilst $75 (£15) was a matter of everyday occurrence. (The teeth used are the two in the top jaw, and are identical with those found in the red deer save in size.) Now the B.P.O.E. may be, and doubtless in many ways is, an excellent institution, but the fact remains that by adopting the wapiti's tooth as their badge they have put a premium on poaching, and hastened in no small degree the downfall of a very fine animal. The harm is done now and cannot be rectified, but it is this which has contributed more than anything else in the last five years to the destruction of *Cervus Canadensis*. Every hunting party one meets has tales of fine bulls found dead, torn and picked by beasts of prey it may be, but with nothing removed from the carcase by human agency save those two little bits of ivory for which

they were shamelessly slaughtered. I have found heads myself left in this abominable condition; heads, too, which any sportsman would have been only too glad to hang up on his walls had he killed them in fair hunting. Yarnall told me that five or six years ago, when out with a hunting party, he found six freshly killed bull wapiti with the teeth, of course, gone. Having a pretty good notion as to the identity of the sportsman who had been thus amusing himself, he followed him up, and three days later arrested him. When searched he was found with sixteen pairs of teeth on him, and was proved to have mailed over forty pairs to Helena the week before. He pleaded guilty at his trial, and was fined—What do you think? Five pounds! The feelings of any one who has the preservation of big game at heart are better imagined than described!

In an otherwise altogether excellent article on "The White Goat and his Country," Mr. Owen Wister, the author of that delightful book, "The Virginian," makes one remark which I should prefer to have seen differently expressed. It is this: "One cannot expect Englishmen to care whether American big game is exterminated or not; that Americans should not is a disgrace." It is a disgrace, and American sportsmen should be ashamed at having allowed such a thing to happen. They deplore the loss of the bison (which was inevitable) and his wholesale and undisturbed extermination, whilst they shut their eyes to the fact that exactly the same thing has been going

WAPITI—WYOMING

on in their midst with regard to the wapiti for goodness knows how long! And now enough on that point.

In those days (not so very long ago) when I devoured books on big game hunting to the exclusion, so my friends tell me, of everything else, I classed hunting in any of those distant countries more blessed than we are in the possession of large *fauna*, first; and deerstalking in our own islands, second. Since hunting wapiti I have had reason to modify that opinion. I do not by any manner of means speak as an authority, I am simply giving my own personal opinion in the matter; but if I were now offered my choice between a week's wapiti hunting *at the beginning of the season*, and a day's stalking in a good Highland forest, I should unhesitatingly choose the latter.

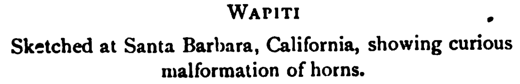
You are allowed to kill four different species of big game by the Wyoming laws, exclusive of bear, namely, deer, wapiti, sheep, and antelope. Our time was limited, and as we particularly wanted to make certain of the wapiti we went for them first. Were I starting on the hunt again I should certainly, if unrestricted in the matter of time, hunt the wapiti last. The bulls then would be much more likely to have left the heavy timber; you would therefore be more likely to see the best heads; and you would have the pleasure of a stalk in the open, which, to my mind, is worth ten in any other kind of country. The best bulls, too, which always remain up in the Park, where they know they are safe as

long as possible, would have come down towards the Hole, and one's chance of getting a good head would be certainly doubled. I should hunt the sheep first, whilst the weather was fine; take my chance of the deer after; then go for the antelope; and, as I said just now, take the wapiti last.

Half of the pleasure in hunting is to spot your beast; keep him under observation all the time you are stalking him; watch how he will act under certain conditions; and, if you are lucky, get in on him. Now all this is absent in wapiti hunting as I found it.

It was simply a series of flukes, lucky or unlucky. If the former I got my bull, patted myself on the back, and thought what a devil of a fine stalker I was: if the latter, I returned to camp dead tired, and wrote to my pals to say that wapiti hunting was a fraud.

Joking apart, however, when your bull is in a thick wood, surrounded by a large and alert harem, it is an extremely difficult matter to get a glimpse of him at all. We will suppose that having located him by his bugling, which is a most ventriloquial sound and as elusive as the call of a corn-crake, you have got within two hundred yards. It is a hundred to one that a cow spots you before you get anywhere within sight of the bull, and even if you do see him it will probably be only a glimpse of his stern. By the time you have got your glass out to have a look at his head he is making tracks over the fallen



This remarkable head was killed some years ago by a guide in Jackson's Hole. It is valued by experts in America at $1000. In both wapiti and park stags a heavy bifurcation from the main beam two-thirds of the way up one horn is not uncommon. To find such a malformation on both horns is extremely rare and I only know of two similar heads.

Length—Right horn, 52″. Left horn, 48″. Spread, 57″.

WAPITI

Sketched at Santa Barbara, California, showing curious malformation of horns.

MALFORMED WAPITI HEADS

timber at a pace which makes you wonder why you called him clumsy, and it is poor fun when you are only allowed to kill two bulls to find that you have killed a beast with horns but little larger than those of a Scotch stag. The timber is so thick in many places that you cannot see twenty yards, and the chances of finding a wounded beast are considerably against the hunter. It may seem incredible to any one who has never seen a big bull wapiti in his native wilds that a beast of his build can so cleverly conceal himself; but so it is.

I lost two good bulls, each in a patch of timber but a quarter of a mile square. The first was lying down, about one hundred and twenty cows being scattered around. I hit him twice before he staggered into a bunch of quaking asp whilst the cows split into two lots. One, of about thirty, came straight up the hill and didn't spot us till they were within five yards; the others ran along the ridge opposite in full view, and there wasn't the sign of my bull in either party. I felt very joyful and the guide was easing his feelings in a barbaric pæan, for we could see the country round for quite a distance and were pretty well certain the bull was lying dead within a few yards of the edge of the wood. Yet though we searched every inch of that wretched little clump of asp for more than an hour never a sign of our bull did we discover! That is the great disadvantage of a small-bore rifle; in many instances no blood comes from a wound.

The other bull escaped in much the same way. We had got close up to a herd we had been following for some hours and were lying within a few yards of the clump of asp in which they were concealed. As often happens, a slight whiff of tainted air brought one of the cows to her feet in a hurry, and the next second there was snapping of twigs, crashing of branches, and then silence. The cows had all bolted to our left, and running to the edge of a steep gully we saw them standing some five hundred yards off, but no bull in sight. As we watched, a great bulk suddenly loomed up behind us and then went plunging down the side of the gully, which was covered with young quaking asp. Until reaching the bottom he, for it was the bull, remained hidden; then I caught a glimpse of him as he crossed a marshy swamp and just had time for a snap. At the shot he lurched heavily into the trees and out of our view, but on going down we found a good trail of blood. For some three hundred yards we traced it, over fallen timber and brush through which it seemed hard to believe that so large an animal could have found his way; then it stopped abruptly, and my guide, who was a most indifferent tracker, failed to pick it up again.

I came to the conclusion that a ·275 Mauser was hardly a heavy enough weapon with which to hunt wapiti; for, on so large an animal the bullet requires to be very accurately placed to stop the beast dead. They are possessed of great vitality,

and one hunter told me he had killed a bull which when cut open was found to have a ·32 bullet embedded in its heart. Like red deer, even when shot right through the heart they seldom drop at once; the same may be said of the pronghorn antelope. I am inclined to think that a Rigby ·350 would be the best weapon, but if a ·275 is used, soft-nosed bullets without splits are the best.

In either of the above-mentioned cases a good Scotch collie would have been invaluable; but alas! Scotch collies were unknown and my bulls were lost. However careful a man is, accidents of this sort are bound to occur in hunting, and I am confident that many bulls are lost for want of a good dog. It is against the law in Wyoming to hunt with dogs, but this would not apply were the tracker on a leash, and any shepherd's dog could bay a wounded beast, which is all that is needed.

We were somewhat unlucky, too, in our choice of a year for hunting wapiti. The tail end of the winter of 1905 had been very severe, indeed there were four feet of snow on all the flats and the spring was unusually late. The summer was exceptionally good, and though this came too late to enable the bulls to grow big heads it gave them heavy bodies. None of the heads which I saw in 1906 were really good; in nearly every case the tops dwindled away to nothing. The bulls we killed were as good as any obtained and they were not by any means remarkable, though my second

C

head had a good span. The best head of the season, killed by a resident in Jackson, had seven points on each horn. In Scotland it would have been called a fourteen-pointer, but in the States the points on one horn only are reckoned. The tines on this head were fairly well defined, but it was narrow and ugly in appearance.

There were also an unusual number of hunters out. Three days after reaching the camp from which we intended to start operations, we counted eight other hunting parties within a radius of six miles. So elated, indeed, and dazzled was the local J.P. at the sight of the two thousand odd dollars collected on hunting licences that he skipped off with a pack-horse one fine morning, and up to the date on which I left Jackson, the magnificent reward of $25 offered for his capture had failed to find a claimant. This same gentleman issued my licence ($50), and judging from his very watery eye and shaking hand, a combination which he naïvely attributed to a long day's ride in a high wind ("Gee! all the wind he got was from the electric fan!" said a bystander), there would be but little difficulty in guessing where most of the $2000 went!

Every non-resident hunter must have a resident guide with him, and assuming that every one of these eight camps contained two hunters, a grand total of at least thirty-two men were roaming the surrounding country intent on the slaughter of bull wapiti. The unfortunate animals were quite 'cute

enough to realise this state of affairs at an early date, and as the guides said, "daren't show their blankety-blank noses outside the ditto ditto timber." It may still be possible in a year when all the heads are good to obtain bulls with really first-class heads, equal to those which fortunate hunters killed fifteen or twenty years ago; but as Huntley Wright used to say: "It is open to discussion!" It would at any rate be unlikely that a casual sportsman coming into the country for the first time would get one. If he did he would have his luck to thank before anything else; and this though he went prepared to spend the entire season hunting wapiti and nothing else.

It will be seen therefore that hunting wapiti, in comparison with the higher forms of big game hunting, such for instance as the pursuit of sheep in British Columbia, is a poor form of sport. Indeed, if a man came to me saying that he intended hunting them, I would strongly urge him to add a little to his prospective expenses and take some sheep ground in Sutherlandshire, where, as the guide-books say, "red deer are occasionally to be met with"; he would have a much better run for his money.

Still the sport is but a tithe of the enjoyment which one gets from a trip of this kind, and I feel rather a brute to be picking holes in it. Perhaps the best idea I can give of it is to describe the way in which I got my second bull.

It was on 24th September. The usual cold light stealing in at the sides of our tent awakened me, and after lying still for a few moments I heard Burton remarking that he thought it was about time we were scrambling out of our reindeer bags. After thinking audibly and profanely about five times, he scrambled. I followed suit. At first I was at a loss to discover the reason for his unnatural keenness, but on crawling out for breakfast and finding him with the only big cup in the outfit, I remembered too late a remark of the night before.

I had become accustomed after ten days to the costume of Edward, my worthy hunter; at first it gave me, as it undoubtedly would some of my stalker friends in Scotland, something of a shock.

A pair of thin leather boots coming high up over the ankles encased his feet. Surmounting these were a pair of corduroy trousers which made the most infernal noise when going through even the most insignificant kinds of brush. The hiatus disconnecting these with the straggling remains of a bright red and green football jersey was filled by a nondescript yellow garment whose name I never ventured to inquire; whilst the whole was kept together by a pair of leather suspenders ornamented with horses' heads. To crown all was a soft black felt hat (how old Scrope would have rejoiced at the sight in these days of tweed caps!) which, however, I will do him the justice to admit,



NELSON YARNALL (*see page* 13)



THE MORNING START

he removed when in the proximity of game; in deference, I suppose, to any feelings the unfortunate animal might be supposed to have left on coming across so startling an apparition.

We left camp on foot about 8 A.M. and made for a ridge where we had seen some beasts on the preceding evening. We knew there was a goodish bull amongst them, as I had fired at him in the gathering dusk and missed. They were not much disturbed, however, and had gone up the hill-side and out of sight. We expected to find them among some quaking asp which covered the opposite slopes.

Half-an-hour's walk brought us to the flat where we had disturbed them the night before, and getting our glasses out, we had a spy. As I moved my glass along the sky line something dark and alert showed up behind a clump of trees, and I made out a cow's head. Presently it disappeared, and, on climbing the ridge, which took us a good half-hour, we found traces of a large band of wapiti. The fir wood which covered the far side of this ridge was extremely thick and strewn with fallen timber, and as we stood there discussing in low tones what it were best for us to do, such a wild screaming bugle came ringing up along the wooded hill-tops, as I had never heard before. It was a sound which never lost its charm for me, and one of the most musical given by a wild animal. Beginning with a low whistle, it rises sharply to a kind of metallic squeal which dies away and ends in a succession of grunts. This meagre description gives

one but a faint idea of the real sound, and I am at a loss to find any adequate comparison. Whistling through a coach-horn might come near the mark, but I can think of nothing else. Our hesitation came to a full stop, and, as the echo died away, we began to follow a faint game trail which led down the hill-side. A gap in the fir tops revealed the opposite hill-slope, and there in the middle of a great grove of quaking asp was a herd of wapiti. Lacking, as they certainly did, the graceful action and thoroughbred look of the red deer, it was yet a beautiful sight to watch them. Quite unconscious of our presence, they lay about the open glades, and basked in the sun. Occasionally an old cow would rise, shake herself, and then lying down again, present her other flank to its welcome rays.

Until the commencement of the rutting season the cows stay about the flats and meadows with their calves, and do not move up to the tops, where the bulls usually remain. In September or so they begin to get restless, and may be found anywhere in thick timber or the open hillside, but are especially fond of quaking asp thickets where the feed is good and in whose shade they lie. Like all animals, they sometimes disregard the presence of man entirely, and I have ridden within five hundred yards of a score or so without having them pay any attention to me beyond raising their heads.

They fight a good deal in September and October, but their duels are rarely fatal. I heard of one hunter



Our first Day after Wapiti



Typical Wapiti Country

who found two bulls lying together after a hard fight, with interlocked horns. One was quite dead and the other dying. On the carcase of the dead one a bear was feeding, which he killed, and then put the wounded beast out of its misery; for which, I should think, the poor beast was very thankful, as a more unpleasant situation can hardly be imagined.

We heard our bull bugling at intervals, but the cows paid no attention, and as he didn't show himself in the open we went on down through the timber. A rustling in the asp ahead warned me that we were getting near the herd, and presently, not sixty yards away, I caught sight of a cow's back. We made our way back out of sight among the trees as she was still blissfully unconscious of our presence, and whilst doing so heard another bull bugling on the ridge from which we had started. I never really set eyes on him, but think he joined the herd which we were after. His challenge roused the wrath of our big bull, and he began to bugle in a manner which would have aroused the envy of any bandmaster. He was an aggravating brute, for we could hear him routing about in the scrub; but owing to its density, try as we might, could never get a glimpse of him. The cows were all round us, but for a wonder there was but little wind, and they paid no attention to our presence. The one we had first seen was still feeding a couple of hundred yards below us, and there were three more within full view and about thirty yards distant. They were rather uneasy, raising their heads and gazing intently

in our direction. The grass was long; the black felt hat was off, and even the objectionable jersey less conspicuous than I had dared to hope. They stood there so long that I began to think their lord and master would come to hurry them up, but presently with slow and stately steps they vanished into the thick timber of which the grove of quaking asp was but the fringe, whilst the bull's whistle grew fainter in the distance. Swearing did no good, and Edward, realising this after a time, condescended to follow.

The pace at which so large a beast as a wapiti can get over fallen timber is astonishing, and the absence of noise even more remarkable. Save for the occasional snap of a twig or a muttered grumble from the bull, we might have been alone among the trees. Yet there were the fresh tracks still leading down the hill in front of us, and as we came to a marshy patch carpeting the floor of a narrow gulch, I could see the bubbles still breaking where some heavy foot had pressed it but a moment before. On we went, and then before we knew what had happened we were right bang in the thick of them! A startled-looking cow appeared, apparently out of a tree within fifteen yards of us, and after one horrified look which sent me into a convulsion of laughter, crashed out of sight. That she landed in something soft was evident from the noise which followed. For some ten seconds the woods re-echoed with their crashing and grunting; then peace! perfect peace! descended and all was still once more. I looked at Edward, and

Edward looked at me, in guilty silence. There must have been at least twenty cows within fifty yards of us, but until the old lady's hurried exit, we were as ignorant of their presence as they were of ours. It takes a genuine still-hunter, which I certainly do not profess to be, to appreciate hunting in timber, though at moments such as this it becomes very exciting.

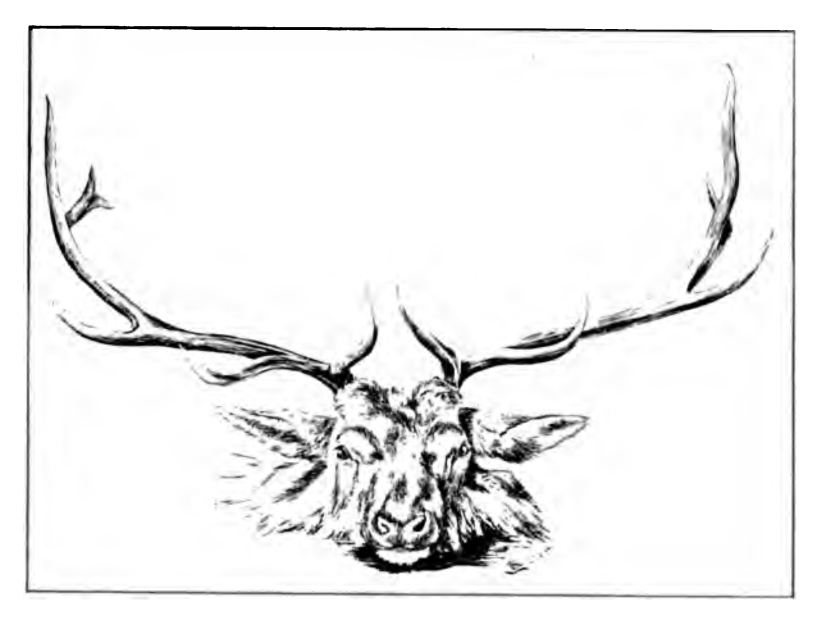
All this time I had never once set eyes on the bull, and I began to believe that I never should. Then the silence was broken again by his angry bugle, at no great distance from us, and hope began to revive. Several smaller bulls answered him, and for some minutes they had a grand concert. After his prolonged silence the big bull appeared anxious to make up for lost time, and indeed seemed to be endowed with ventriloquial powers of which even Arthur Prince need not have felt ashamed. We followed them up as quickly as we were able and could hear them within a few hundred yards of us, but the big bull was so angry gathering his fickle harem around him once more that he had no time to think of us, and his grunts and whistles seemed to pervade the whole place. First we could hear him three hundred yards away on the top of a ridge; panting we tripped and stumbled thither. When we got there, not the sign of a bull was to be seen, but back, apparently from the very spot which we had left, would come an alluring whistle which sent us post haste down the hill again. This exhausting form of hide and seek, we, I will not say enjoyed,

but took a very secondary part in for a good ten minutes. The big bull's voice was quite unmistakable, and we paid no attention to the smaller beasts who answered his hoarse challenges at a respectful distance. Why we were not noticed a dozen times I don't know, as we were again right in the middle of the herd, and in a patchy kind of way could see wapiti between the tree trunks all around.

At length after an unusually exhausting flank movement, we heard him bugling just behind a rise in the ground. From the sound he seemed to be coming our way. We crawled very carefully down among the fallen timber, but in spite of all our care came right on to a big cow, who instantly stuck her nose up in the air and assumed a most disdainful expression. I have been told that a cow will bark like a hind if suddenly alarmed, but have never heard one do so myself, for which, on the present occasion, I was devoutly thankful. She was standing behind a tree with only her neck showing, and for the twentieth time that morning I thought the game was up. Then, just as she gathered her feet up and disappeared into the thicket with a crash, the big bull let out a terrific roar apparently just over our very heads. At the best of times you want good sight when stalking, and in a wood it is more necessary than ever. There, as against a background of snow or an open sky-line, the correct proportions of a head are apt to become distorted, and though it is easier to judge the head of



HEAD OF PRONGHORN ANTELOPE



MY SECOND WAPITI BULL

bull wapiti than a red deer's, one is very apt to be misled. I could see nothing at first, but on twisting one eye round the trunk of a tree I made out an apparently huge horn silhouetted like a dead limb against a patch of open sky. Lower down a dull white patch which I knew was a bull's stern, in the half light. Under his breath, hissing like an escape of gas, I heard my *fidus Achates* murmuring, "It's the big bull! It's the big bull!" So pleased was he at his own perspicacity, that he continued to hiss until my shot rang out. The bullet raked the bull right forward, and he sank at once with a broken spine, but I had to fire at his neck again, before he fell over on his side. He was in very poor condition, unlike the first bull I got which had three inches of fat on his haunches. He had, however, a very good head for that season, with a span of forty-seven and a half inches inside measurement. His tops, like all I saw, were very poor. After performing "the usual offices," we prepared to make a start, when Edward created a momentary diversion by announcing in a cheerful tone that he hadn't the least idea where we were. The bull's ventriloquial efforts had certainly led us a pretty dance, but the chief reason for engaging a guide is to have a man with you who knows the country, and of this, Edward, I discovered too late, was conspicuously ignorant. The question of engaging guides beforehand, when one knows nothing of the country, is always a difficult one, for the prospective employer

is between the devil and the deep sea. Unless he gets a personal recommendation from someone who has hunted with a reliable guide, he may find himself badly let in; whereas if he engages no one at all, on reaching his starting point for the hunt he may find all the good guides already engaged.

As it was, we had to blaze our way out of the timber and finally reached the ridge from which we had started, getting back to camp about ten o'clock. We rode up in the afternoon and packed the head down before dark.

Such was wapiti hunting as I found it: yet it has many a charm. It is hard to appreciate the beauties of a fir wood when you are slipping amongst fallen timber and barking your shins at every step: afterwards, as you look back along the trail you have covered, you forget the hardships and see only the glamour of a day which will not return.

It seems unlikely that I shall ever look upon the Tetons again, or go riding through the fir woods over which they stand sentinel. Yet often as I sit of an evening before the fire I shall think of them as I first saw them, rising in changeless majesty from a sea of mist, the pale beauty of an evening sky beyond: and, too, when I wake with a start in the night watches and seem to hear again some great bull's challenging bugle go ringing out upon the stillness of the dawn.

CHAPTER III

BRITISH COLUMBIA AND SOME NOTES ON GAME RESERVES

By the middle of October we were back at Jackson, and made north for Vancouver as quickly as possible, for it was getting late to shoot in British Columbia. Over the Teton Pass, by the same road as that on which poor Shorty met his death at the hands of Trampas, we went, and so to Victor, a tiny hamlet dumped down at the foot of the mountains. Thence by rail to Salt Lake City, where we spent a couple of days looking at the Tabernacle, and the uninteresting abodes of the great Brigham's various uninteresting-looking wives. From this place we journeyed to Butte, Montana, surely the most horrible spot in the world, and at the end of the month reached Vancouver. Here let me give a word of thanks to Mr. A. Bryan Williams, the Provincial Game-Warden. His kindness knew no bounds, and any success which we had on our trip is largely due to him.

Whilst taking out our licences (£10) I mentioned the names of our guides. Mr. Williams' face fell to zero. To make a long story short, we found that they bore a very bad reputation as hunters,

and on our arrival at Lillooet lost no time in getting rid of them. The next thing to do was to find substitutes. It was the end of the season, and though guides were very scarce we were not so absolutely stuck as we should have been a few weeks earlier. Russell, the Game-Warden at Lillooet, said he would see what could be done, and came late on the evening of our arrival with the announcement that he had found men who would do. As he was speaking, down between the two lines of wooden houses which constituted the main street, came the sound of a voice upraised in song.

"That's one of them," said Russell; "I'll call him in."

The song ended in a quavering wail, and a muttered conversation took place outside.

Then the Incompetent One entered.

"Very pleas'd meet you!" said he.

We assured him that the pleasure was mutual.

He was a strange figure. Clad in buck-skins, beautifully embroidered and covered with dangling strips of hide (donned, so Russell said, in honour of his prospective engagement), he had obviously been celebrating our advent. There he stood, swaying feebly from one leg to the other, and grinning amiably at the ceiling.

He did not look a promising guide, and in a whispered aside we said as much to Russell. Then the situation became apparent. Henry, admittedly the best guide in the district, was the Incompetent



Lillooet, British Columbia



Fording a River

One's partner, and where Henry went, there also went the Incompetent One. Russell strongly urged us to engage him. There was but little choice in the matter, so after some parleying we did.

"Try giv' 'tire sa'sfaction," murmured the swaying figure.

Whether it was meant as a statement or a command he didn't condescend to explain. With that he lurched out and we retired to rest. I had dozed off, when suddenly I was awakened with a start. Someone was talking outside, and through the wooden planks every word was audible.

"H'ray! Poor young feller!" came the voice. A pause. Then it began again: "When doffed his casque he felt free air." "Air!" it repeated, "wha' rhymes air? Ri! *I* know wha' rhymes air. See now young Marmion wildly stare." Another pause. "Poor young Marmion. Tha' doesn' soun' ri'," in a puzzled tone. "Stare!" Angrily, "that doesn' soun' ri'!" At this point in his soliloquy I heard a muffled thump; the voice ceased, and a subdued guffaw came through the wall of my room.

"You're all right," said another voice. I thought I recognised it.

"Leggo," grunted the Incompetent One.

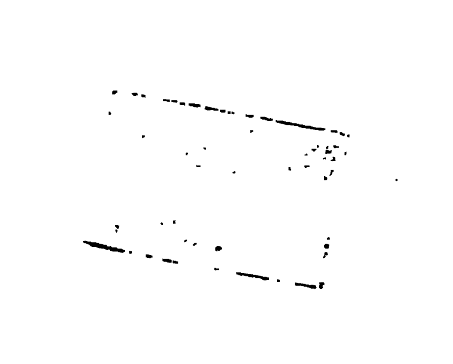
"Come on," said a third voice; "take him off."

The victim apparently made the best of a bad job here, for he broke into Tennyson and was carried off. Far up the street I heard a cry of "Poor young Marmion!" Then silence.

I got to know him well afterwards, as one does, sharing the same camp fire and the same meals. At first I was sorry and amused alternately; then irritated, for the Incompetent One in search of game was a sight for the gods. We had very little whisky with us, and so were not troubled with the vicissitudes of "poor young Marmion." Yet on our return to Lillooet I saw him in his cups again, and a pathetic figure he was.

Tragedy was stamped in every line and curve of his battered figure. Common, brutalised, and debased, he yet had the education and instincts of a gentleman. They peered at you unexpectedly from hidden corners, and even in his silences, perhaps more then than at any other time, made their presence felt. He was very fond of reading, especially poetry, and knew long passages of Scott, Tennyson, and even the Psalms by heart. He was a bit of a poet in his own way, and addressed an ode to me before we left.

When I read it and found references to "my rosebud mouth," a comparison between "the tinted splendours of the rose" and the blush on my modest cheek, finishing with a veiled likening of my voice to "the wood dove's coo," I realised that he had also more than his share of poetic imagination! His father had worn the Queen's uniform, and had fought in her battles. What it was that had stranded the tattered remnants of a once good family in that out-of-the-way corner of the world I never really knew. I heard it discussed, and





HENRY



GOAT COUNTRY

the general opinion was always the same, "It's in the blood!" So I suppose the old man will drag out his dreary days amid those silent hills until his call comes. Why should we judge him, all unknowing of the temptations which beset him?

Henry was an entirely different kind of man, and one with whom it was a pleasure to be associated. Always cheerful and hard-working, he had splendid sight and was a first-rate hunter. Eventually the Incompetent One got laid up with the hard work, and returned to Lillooet, whilst Burton got hold of an Indian named Bell to replace him. This man was an excellent hunter too, but he spoke very little English.

In the Bridge River country where we made our trip, the sportsman may count on killing three varieties of game, namely, sheep, goats, and deer. By far the finest sport is afforded by the first-named of these three animals, and it is proportionately sad to contemplate the fact that both in numbers and size he is dwindling. In districts where formerly heads of forty-five inches and longer were obtained, a man is now considered lucky if he gets one of thirty-two inches. The reasons are not far to seek. Natural causes have something to do with it; sheep-scab kills some, so do mountain lions; so do eagles; so do hard winters; and last, but not least, so do hunters. I am glad to find that my observations are confirmed by so well-known a writer as Mr. W. T. Hornaday, the Director of the New York Zoological

Gardens. He writes as follows: "I am compelled to believe that unless several great provincial game and forest reserves are at once set aside in British Columbia, the mountain sheep of that province are doomed to extinction. In total numbers the sheep in southern British Columbia are already down to a very low point. Many an Eastern sportsman has gone to that country to kill a big ram, worked hard, spent nearly or quite $1000, and returned empty-handed because of the scarcity of sheep."

The tendency of the present generation is to over-preserve, and no doubt it is a fault on the right side. I do not wish it for a moment to be thought that I am an opponent of preserves, on the contrary I am strongly in their favour, but most things can be overdone and where everything is preserved there is nothing left to shoot! It is a most important question, this care of the wild animals which still lurk in remote corners of the world, and one which must be a subject of keen interest to every true sportsman. The formation, some few years ago, of a society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the British Empire, shows what a strong public feeling there is on the matter.

The best examples of the success which attends a properly regulated reserve may be found in the increase in numbers of every species of American game to be found in the vicinity of the Yellowstone Park. It is a statement not very remote from the truth to say, that had it not been for this enormous

reserve, wherein every animal, with the exception of the more dangerous carnivora, dwells absolutely protected and unmolested, the wapiti would have been, practically speaking, extinct, at any rate in that part of the country.

Not content, indeed, with the Park as a reserve, the Federal Government, with creditable foresight, have lately enclosed as a timber reservation a further tract of country immediately south of the Park, comprising an area of some hundred square miles. But game reserves of so huge a nature as this require a very large annual expenditure to render them efficient, and in many cases smaller reserves would prove quite as efficient and a good deal cheaper. They would, in fact, answer exactly the same purposes as do sanctuaries in the deer forests of Scotland. Take any ordinarily situated forest in the north of Scotland, abolish its sanctuary, and in a few years what do you find? Smaller heads, poorer beasts, and a general falling off all round. The effect, if you go on long enough, is precisely the same in any big game district. The results at first are not so apparent, for the animals are living under more natural conditions and have a wider range, but in the long run they are identical. In British Columbia only about one-tenth of the country is properly settled, leaving an area of something like 280,000 square miles in which hunting can be obtained.

The importance of the proper establishment of game reserves in this magnificent territory cannot

be over-estimated, and would probably ensure some of our most valuable big game from destruction. And not only that. The whole stock of game in the districts in which the reserves were situated would increase, and when the stock became too great for the area of ground in the reserve there would be a natural overflow into the surrounding country. This overflow would in the natural course of events consist of adult males, which are the chief objects of pursuit on the part of the hunter. In a letter which I received from Mr. A. Bryan Williams, he says:—

"I am of the opinion that these reserves should not be of large extent, and only one or two in the Province. There should be other reserves created in many different parts of the country, capable of being carefully watched by the Deputy Game-Warden of the district. It is no use creating enormous reserves which cannot receive adequate protection except at very great expense."

I thoroughly agree with every word that Mr. Williams has written, and only wish that he could get some of the powers that be to look at things in the same light. He goes on to say:—

"Reserves should, however, be created at once. That is the main thing. Before long it will be hard to find suitable spots, destitute of either ranchers, miners, or timber men, all of whom would interfere with the protection of the game. When once a reserve is created, *no one* except a game-

warden should be allowed to put foot inside the reservation on any pretext whatever, either with or without firearms. The only possible exception to this rule should be in the case of a proper person receiving a permit from the local game-warden, and from him alone. This is imperative, as the official in charge of the reserve would then be in a position to know exactly who entered the reservation, and to whom passes were granted. The pass should be checked by the local warden when the person holding the permit left the reserve, and forwarded to the Provincial Game-Warden."

This method of procedure would be admirable, when the reserve was first organised at any rate. Later on the severity of the regulations might be relaxed in a measure, that is, when the animals once knew where they could find protection. That they would do this in a very short time, no one who has even a cursory knowledge of their habits will doubt.

If reserves, such as I here advocate, are ever seriously contemplated by the proper authorities, I consider that it would be a very great mistake to attempt to combine, what I may perhaps call the social side of such an undertaking with its practical utility. By this I mean that they should be created and maintained simply and solely as tracts for the preservation and encouragement of wild animals, not places where animals are preserved for a crowd of tourists and holiday-makers to snap-shot and treat

as pets. That can all come later, though I imagine that in those localities where the contemplated reserves are situated, the means of transport will have to be much improved before they become popular resorts such as Banff or the Yellowstone Park. In British Columbia, however, there is one thing which will have to undergo a very radical change before we can hope to see reserves established with any prospect of success whatever. I refer to the "Organisation of Districts." To any one who has not studied the question, this requires a little explanation. Sec. 12 of the "Game Protection Act," 1898, of British Columbia reads as follows:—

"Sec. 12. The provisions of this Act shall not apply to Indians or resident farmers in unorganised districts of this Province, with regard to deer killed for their own or their families' immediate use, for food only, and not for the purpose of sale or traffic; nor shall this Act apply in unorganised districts to free miners actually engaged in placer mining or prospection, or to surveying or engineering parties engaged in their duties, who may kill game for food, nor shall this Act apply to the Curator of the Provincial Museum, or his assistant, assistants, or agent (appointed by him in writing), while collecting specimens of natural history for the Provincial Museum.

"(*a*) Unorganised districts under this section shall be and mean such portions of the Province as the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may, by proclama-

tion in two successive issues of the British Columbia Gazette, define as such.

"(c) It shall not be lawful for Indians to kill does or fawns from the first day of February until the first day of August. 1898, a. 24, s. 12; 1902, c. 28, s. 5; 1905, c. 25, s. 6."

Now after this was passed the Government saw fit to declare the whole of the Province unorganised with the exception of cities and municipalities. Immediately after petitions came in from the electoral districts of Kamloops, Greenwood, Grand Forks, Okanagan, Similkameen, and, later, one from Fernie also. In accordance with their request these districts were again declared organised. The whole of the rest of the Province is unorganised, though it is probable that the Columbia district and E. Kootenay will shortly be placed on the same footing as Fernie and the other districts above mentioned; if indeed this is not already so.

Now so far as farmers and surveying parties are concerned but little harm has been done; though giving them such privileges would be troublesome in the event of a game reserve being created in any unorganised district.

The Indians may kill only deer; but the deer tribe includes moose and caribou, and there is nothing at present to prevent them killing the calves of these animals. Does and fawns are not allowed to be killed between February and August, but it is almost impossible to enforce this provision.

The Indian question is a serious one, and though possibly it does not affect the majority of sportsmen who hunt in British Columbia, Burton had his chances of a good stag quite spoiled by Indian meat hunters.

When we reached the camp from which we intended to hunt mule deer, we found the whole place covered with signs of Indians, and of dead and wounded deer.

The most irritating part of the whole thing was the discovery of some nice mule deer heads which had been recently killed and left to rot. They were, of course, no use to the Indians, who do not value them as trophies and are forbidden by law to sell them. It really was annoying, for late in the season the meat of the does is much better than that of the stags, and it was only slackness on the part of the Indians which made them kill males. Still, there was no getting over the fact that they had frightened all the deer out of the country.

The case of the Indians is bad enough, but the privileges enjoyed by free miners are an absolute scandal. It is utterly out of the question to prove that a man is not actually prospecting; he may not tap at a rock all day long, but so long as he is outside a town and says that he is prospecting it is impossible to dispute him. Then as the provisions of the Act have no application to him with regard to game killed for food, there is no limit to what he may do, and what many of them actually do do, with impunity.

He may kill moose, caribou, wapiti, deer, or sheep in the hottest weather, when he can only at most eat a few pounds of meat, leave the rest to rot, and go off and kill another; he may kill the females of all species during the breeding season, when the meat is totally unfit for food; he may kill females with newly-born young, which are too small to look after themselves; he may kill pheasants, black-game, partridges and other game birds, on their nests if he chooses, and this almost within the city limits of the biggest towns in the Province. Mr. Williams tells me he has seen numbers of irresponsible men riding along the trails in spring, when the deer are in deplorable condition after a hard winter, and almost too weak to get out of the way, taking pot-shots at the poor brutes with revolvers, hardly troubling to see whether they made a kill and never following a wounded animal. Almost every district which has had a mining excitement has had the game almost entirely depleted in this manner. The more outrageous offences have certainly been stopped to some extent; but there is still a great deal of this sort of thing going on, and now that the laws are being more strictly enforced many of these irresponsible persons take out a miner's licence so as to render themselves safe from prosecution.

I am writing now of the condition of affairs some two years ago. Whether things have altered since I was in British Columbia I have not heard, but the Government are much to blame for allowing

such a state of affairs to have existed, and until they, in their superior wisdom, see fit to take the matter in hand, it seems useless to talk of the care of wild game, or the proper establishment of reserves.[1]

[1] Since writing the above I have received a long letter from Mr. Williams. Acting on his recommendation the Government have established a large game reserve in the Yarlakan district. The game seem to have discovered that they are safe there, and sheep and goats are already on the increase. Reserves are also in process of formation in East Kootenay and Vancouver Island. Altogether the question of game preservation seems to be in a much more hopeful condition than when I was in British Columbia. The Government grant for Game Protection in 1908 was at the rate of $13,000.00, and the bounty on cougars and wolves has been raised to $15.00 per head. A grant of $9,000.00 has been set aside in the estimates for this purpose.

CHAPTER IV

THE STORY OF A RAM

WHEN I began the last chapter I had no thought of drifting into a discussion on game reserves. However, I did, so there's an end of it. Now I will ask you to accompany me to a camp on Bridge River on the morning of 5th November 1906. There it was that the Incompetent One and I sallied forth together for my first day's hunting in British Columbia. After a long and tiring day in deepish snow I shot a small ram. He was, it is true, far from being a good head, but he was, or had been, a real live bighorn, and I took it as a good omen. Never was confidence more misplaced! For the next eleven days did I toil up and down those snow-clad mountains and never even fire a shot!

Two days after the death of my sheep, Burton killed a couple of nice goats, but it seemed as if I was never even going to see anything again, and I got thoroughly disheartened.

We changed guides and I went with Henry. Not a bit of use! Burton went off with the Incompetent One, strolled up a small hill at the back of the camp, sat down for lunch, lit a fire—the luxurious beggar!—and a good ram came up and warmed himself until he got shot for his cheek!

Then one day I saw my big ram, alas! that the pronoun should be merely a literary euphemism, for he was never mine.

It was a fine country, too, that over which he roamed; a country of long narrow glens with steeply rising sides; of firs, set fast about the scattered clumps of poplars and graceful gold-crowned cottonwoods, of rocky crags and steeply driven slides, about which, by tortuous paths known only to themselves, the great white goats mysteriously moved; of bare open hilltops, roamed by wandering bands of sheep, and swept by all the winds of heaven; of sunlit corries, shadowed by vast frowning cliffs; a country a man may thank the gods that he has seen when young, whose memory he wraps about his heart when old.

On the hillside below, looking in the distance like a small bear, a porcupine ploughed through the snow with an air of sturdy independence. Somewhere in the rocks a second one kept squeaking. "Beastly weather! Beastly weather!" he seemed to say. I idly watched the one in sight. Far, far beneath him, right at the bottom of a gorge, just where the rocky walls opened out on to the open hillside, something dark was moving. It was the first view I had of my ram. I have a vision of him now as he breasted the steep slope; of his great chest and sturdy limbs moving with the regularity of a machine, his nose up and his mighty horns curving back on either side of his swollen neck.



Mountain Sheep, British Columbia

We had to leave him, it was too late, but the next morning we were on his trail.

Bitterly cold it was struggling up the hill where we had seen him. My beard and moustache were covered with little icicles, and at the top I could hardly grip the rifle. A sudden snowstorm nearly blinded us, and the strong north wind choked the breath down our throats. We could dimly see the tracks ahead and fought our way on.

Half-an-hour later, through the white elusive flakes which fell softly about us, something moved. Cautiously we advanced, and a ram and three ewes sprang from behind a fir. For a moment I was tempted to fire, and only for a moment. It was not my ram, but a young beast, his horns scarcely as large as the one I had killed a fortnight before. So we had all our long climb up the hill again. The snow ceased to fall, the sun came out, and we were, by the time we reached the top, both dripping with perspiration. There we came on our friend's tracks again, and saw where, daunted by the savage fury of the wind, he had led his band back down the hillside.

All day we followed them, and then, late in the afternoon, came upon their creators.

They fed, half a mile below us, scraping at the snow with their fore-feet and partially hidden by a thicket of willows. Carefully and silently we crept down the hill and took up our position on a flat snow-covered rock overhung by a blasted pine. The scattered outposts of the willow clump peered fifty

yards beneath through the snow. The sheep were in a long-drawn string; the ram, inevitably last. Nothing had disturbed them, though as I lay cramped and shivering on the ledge two lines kept beating into my brain with monotonous persistency:

> "Do you know the long day's patience, belly down on frozen drift,
> While the head of heads is feeding out of range?"

The leading ewe was working up a little alley in the bushes but a hundred and twenty yards off.

"At last," thought I, "I've got you!"

The ewe, *horribile dictu*, threw up her head. The sheep behind her stopped feeding; there was a rush down the hillside, and I, like the Highland chieftain, was left lamenting.

It is true that two hundred and fifty yards distant they stopped, and I cut a little tuft of hair from the ram's neck; then they were gone and that finished round one.

Early the next morning we were off again. The snow had ceased, and on reaching the summit of the ridge, from which a splendid view of the opposite hillside could be obtained, I saw wavering lines of tracks pencilled sharply in the snow. Here and there they ran, crossing and recrossing; waving and straight, woven into intricate patterns and fantastic designs. I puzzled them out through all their twistings and turnings, and there, at the end of their meanderings they came to a full stop in the shape of a little black speck. It was a small ram; near him were two or three ewes, and high up,

hundreds of feet above them, at the top of the hill, was the little band which claimed my friend as its lord. Two and a half hours later, tired and panting, we reached the summit. It had been hard work, and in one place dangerous. Almost sheer below me I had seen the tops of the fir trees, looking like pin points waiting to impale anything which fell; but we had successfully crossed the dangerous point and were getting near our quarry.

My bad luck was still in the ascendant. Cautiously as we advanced, we could not prevent the dry snow crackling beneath our feet, nor deafen a ewe which stood staring at us over a rock seventy yards off.

By the way, unlike a stag, whose eye one can plainly see up to eighty yards, a sheep's eye is almost invisible at sixty. The white nose is most conspicuous.

In the scattered firs below I could see more sheep, among them a ram.

"Fire!" said Henry, "fire!"

Very foolishly I did so, and the drama of yesterday was repeated with great exactness, save that my shot did not even touch him.

It is impossible to lay down any law about such shots. If one leaves it hoping for a better chance, it is odds on that such a chance never presents itself. Then you blame yourself for not firing. Fire, and you kick yourself for not exercising the virtue of patience. We ploughed doggedly down

the hill in their tracks, and on our way heard two distant shots which I knew must come from Burton. The little band of sheep kept steadily on, round a rocky crag, and so out of sight.

It was very bad going, and among some ice-covered rocks I slipped and bruised my knee painfully. I was picking myself up rather ruefully, feeling, if possible, even more down on my luck than before, when Henry, who was in front, drew back quietly and looked round to see where I was. At the same instant I saw some ewes with their backs turned staring intently before them. Joining Henry, I peeped round the corner, and saw a great struggle in progress. What had happened was this. Burton's shots, as I afterwards discovered, had been at a couple of rams. Missing them, the pair had wandered over to my corrie and had just hit off the lot at which I had fired as they came down the hill. Hence the tournament which was in progress as we caught them up. The big ram was at it, hammer and tongs, with one of the strangers, whose pal watched the struggle from behind a fir. About a hundred and eighty yards off, as he advanced a step, I got a good chance, of which, much to my astonishment, I took advantage. My glasses were covered with steam, I was shaken by my fall, my sleeves were full of snow, and I was puffing like an energetic old dowager I once saw dancing a two-step with a youth of nineteen! The admiring circle of ewes took but little

notice of my shot, and watched the big ram as he drove his opponent up among some rocks.

"There he is!" muttered Henry.

"Which?" I gasped despairingly.

Any one who has shot in glasses will sympathise with my feelings. The sheep were much the colour of their background; indeed, I could hardly distinguish one from the other. How I prayed that they would come down but a couple of feet where a bank of snow would throw them into relief! But it was not to be. As I fired, the big ram gave a heave and knocked his opponent off the ledge into the snow. Then, giving me one contemptuous glance, he turned and vanished. They were all on the move by this time. The fallen ram had lost himself among a parcel of ewes, and as I watched them stringing up the steep side of Yarlakan, towering eight thousand feet above me, I realised that my second chance had gone.

It was dark when we trudged into camp; my knee was very painful, and I resolved that I would acknowledge the big ram as victor, and let him "gang his ain gait" undisturbed in the future by my aimless shots. That was before supper. Then I began to reflect on his lost glories. I looked across the camp fire and caught Henry's eye.

"He'd a beautiful head," began Henry.

"Oh! a nice head!" I grudgingly admitted.

"He'll be just over the other side of Yarlakan," continued Henry meditatively.

"I daresay!" I answered carelessly.

"He'd a grand head!" mused Henry.

"Oh! hang it all; I'll come!" said I, and I did, though I knew that the Red Gods were against me in this.

How the sensations of that last morning come back to me as I sat resting on the ridge behind the camp, knowing that it was my last day, and that if I failed then he would be gone for ever. From the great flat waste of clouds which eddied below us rose scattered hilltops flecked with snow, like islets studding an inland sea. The flaming sun pencilled their farthermost ridges with a thread of gold, and where an open gap in the barrier wall allowed him, bathed the mists in refulgent glory. It seemed fancifully unreal, and I half waited to see some great galleon, with flashing oars and silken sail bellying before the gentle breeze, come sailing round a low-lying point with flying pennons, in search of El Dorado or some other land of which I did but dream. Beyond the distant thread of gold shone a sky of the palest blue, which deepened in the vault above to a transparent azure. A few small fleecy clouds floated serenely in the heavens, whilst their earthbound fellows rolled sluggishly about some beetling crag, as the encroaching tide about a lonely point.

It was a glorious morning; a straggler from the golden age, when the world was young, and men took less thought about the morrow and what it

would bring forth. Such a day it must have been when Jason went voyaging to find the Golden Fleece, when Helen of Troy set men's hearts ablaze, and the heroes died and were gathered to Olympus.

Then as I watched, the scene changed. A great lusty wind came whirling up about the trees, sighing mightily, as though loath to bring destruction on such dreams. At its breath my inland sea vanished, leaving nothing on which a galleon with silken sails could ride, and in its place was a great country of narrow fir-crowned ridges, dark woods of pine, and groves of leafless stems.

Masses of mist came swirling down the hillsides and through their folds loomed mighty unimagined mountains, glittering and sparkling in the sun, to vanish ere the eye had fully grasped their beauty. Here to the south was one, its glories all exposed; there a northward slope lay covered in its winter's shroud. In the hollow a fir wood stood, silhouetted in spiky outline against the sea of mist; above it, vast timbered slopes and rocky white-laced cliffs ranged themselves in awe-inspiring grandeur. Then came a final whirl, the mist vanished, and, as the mountain range behind stood dazzlingly forth in terrifying majesty, I felt appalled at the immensity of my own insignificance.

Words were forming slowly in my brain, then in a flash I was back beneath just such another sky on the deck of a great war-ship, and I caught at the

meaning of that deep-throated chant which came back to me over the years:

"Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame."

I wondered what unnumbered centuries had gone to the ordering of the scene which lay before me.

Oblivious to my thoughts, Henry had left me, and I saw his tracks stringing up the narrow gorge at whose far end I had left the ram the night before. Following him, it came across me that even if I had seen no ram I had done well to climb among those everlasting hills, to wonder at their beauty and the grateful rest they held.

So, the falling timber and interlacing scrub which covered the frozen burn left thankfully behind us, we came to the spot where my dead ram lay.

Then our climb began. From where we stood the great white side of Yarlakan towered seven or eight thousand feet straight above us. Slides of splintered shale showed grey and menacing at one point, where the sun had robbed them of their covering; at another dark fissure-ribbed lines of rock protruded, and came crawling down the hillside, swollen at first, to taper gradually into the vertebræ of some forgotten monster. Little patches of fallen pines and scrub lay thick about the bottom of the gorge, to spread and scatter as the ground above them grew more bleak. With stunted outposts they held their own as far as timber line; beyond, cold unbroken sameness dazzled one with its chilly glare. Higher and yet higher we

toiled, the straight-stemmed pines below us gradually dwindling to toy Christmas trees, and then to tiny bushes. Never a sound broke the stillness, save perhaps a woodpecker hammering industriously away in the valley, hundreds of feet below, or the indignant squeak of a frightened porcupine crouched far back in his chamber amidst the rocks, as he presented a spiky tail to the intruder on his solitude. Yet always before us stretched that trampled line in the snow, made by the ram and his followers in the night, deep and narrow where the band converged on some known high-road which we could not see, shallow and wide where its scattered units spread. Bare patches revealing the long yellow hill grass marked a resting place, but the trampled line went wavering on over the crest which marked our skyline, and always the thought of those mighty horns drove us forward. Three long weary hours it took us, ere we drew near the summit, full of hope, yet not knowing what we should see. This uncertainty it is which makes the fascination of hunting in an unknown mountain country so intense. What vista will unfold itself as you reach that distant height? A great spreading forest, or an open treeless plain; a towering range of mountains, or an undulating prairie; what will the promised land give you? Whatever else it may be, it cannot be uninteresting; and among the mountains there is an element of luck, if so you like to designate it, which must always be absent elsewhere.

To us the summit gave a huge semicircular corrie (it would have been an ideal place for stags on a fine day with a north-west wind), on whose extreme outer lip we stood. A couple of miles away, two-thirds of the way down on the opposite side, were eight little black specks. They were scattered about perfectly bare open ground, a narrow gully scarring the hillside to their left. Out came our glasses, but even before I had mine to my eye I felt certain that the largest of those black specks was the big ram, for there was only one; so was Henry, for the next second, "heedless of grammar, we both cried 'That's him!'" The next thing to do was to get at him, but the sheep were in rather a nasty place for a stalk. The ewes were spread about the hill-side, unconcernedly feeding; two of them some distance from the rest. The ram began walking slowly over to them, and as he approached, one bolted past him. The second was more coquettish and stood her ground. The ram went up to her, and raising his foreleg tapped her gently several times. She did not move even then, and the ram stayed by her.

"No good waiting here," said Henry, "if they'll stay there, we can do it."

So off we went again, all the better for our little rest, round behind the highest peak of Yarlakan, with the great, white, silent hills sleeping their eternal sleep around us. The famous Fraser River showed faint and blue in the distance, dark woods

in whose shade lurk many a noble stag, clustering thick on either bank. Faint and blue, too, were the hills beyond Lillooet—the Fair Maiden, or, as some call it, The Valley of Flowers—for the snow had not touched their slopes as yet. Then from a snow hummock we took a look to see if the sheep were still there, and, reassured, dipped out of sight again, and so on, till we were but half a mile from our goal. After that the difficult part of the stalk began, but it was the part I loved, for I was in my own country once more, with no insinuating branches and down timber to perplex my eyes and wear my temper and my clothes. It was hard work for all that, dragging one tired leg after the other, the snow on my knickerbockers turned to ice.

In behind a dip we slithered, panting and steaming, but still happy; for, though in front it seemed a flat expanse, I knew of the hollow that held the sheep, and that if we reached that other rock but fifty yards ahead, I should at least get a shot. So on we crawled with angular care, and finally reached our rock. Then Henry quietly and slowly raised his head and as gently lowered it. To my look of interrogation he replied by a nod. Giving him the rifle I repeated his performance, and met the astonished gaze of a ewe but a short twenty yards distant. I was so surprised that at first I did nothing beyond mechanically holding out my hand for the rifle. Behind me I heard Henry hissing blasphemous maledictions and advice.

"Higher up, man! Higher up! D—n it! Lift yourself higher!"

With agonised and conscious care which tried its best to eliminate the unwelcome presence of the ewe, I obeyed, and pulled the rifle up beside me. The ram, stern on, a hundred and fifty yards away, turned his head. Then, as a little spirt of snow shot up just over his back, he turned again and slowly followed the coquettish ewe.

"Over him!" cried Henry, resigned desperation in his tone. An ominous silence succeeded a second miss. Then the ram turned his side for a second and I fired again.

"You've broken his leg!" I heard a murmur from behind, but the ram still held on. Round the turn of the gully went the ewes and along the opposite side, the ram last and broadside to me. In spite of my bad shooting, I managed to take advantage of the chance he gave me, and as the last ewe vanished over the skyline, he went rolling down the steep slope of the gully.

"We've got him at last, Henry!" I cried, as we made for him, but I thought even then that his answer lacked the joy which the end of our stalk should have brought. As we got closer a horrible suspicion seized me, a suspicion which increased as I raised the curving horns out of the snow. They seemed to have shrunk and their graceful lines to have shortened. It was not the big ram at all! I had little doubt, as I examined him

more closely, that he was the companion of the one I had killed on the preceding evening. His horns as he fell measured fifteen inches exactly at the base, but they were short for he was only a young beast, and sadly and sorrowfully I watched the final rites being performed.

But it was fated that I should see my giant again. When he finished, Henry cast a look round and proposed, as a Scotch stalker would have put it, a "bit turn" round the sky-line.

"I think I saw some tracks!" said he, and not much caring, I acquiesced.

For half-an-hour or so, tired and disappointed, I plodded after him. A couple of ptarmigan, too well hidden for us to see, kept up stifled squeaking among the rocks, until wearied at our stupidity they flashed up like a pair of great, white, living snowflakes and whisked round a corner. The trail of the frightened ewes, whom we had robbed of their leader, kept on, and presently other tracks appeared which led us over yet another crest. There the same kind of scenery was revealed. Firs and pines, rocks and snow, here bare, there covered; and, winding over a distant knoll, strung our band of ewes, but no ram was to be seen.

Ahead of me, Henry ploughed stubbornly through the snow, for he, too, was tired and disappointed. Then as my glance wandered back from the ewes, I saw him suddenly crouch in the snow and whip out his glasses. Turning his head, he beckoned

me furiously forward, and I broke into a shambling run.

"It's the big ram!" he gasped. "He's seen us. Can't get any closer. It'll be a long shot!"

The light was slowly fading, but away down below us, looking a terribly long three hundred yards off, stood a clustered bunch of sheep. One stood out from them clearly, even at that distance, and this time there could be no mistake. I once read that there are two methods of taking a shot; one is, "I hope to heaven I shall hit you!" the other, to clench your teeth, and say, "By Jove! you brute, I'll get a bullet into you somewhere!" My mental attitude must, I suspect, have been the former.

I remember with fingers that shook turning the safety bolt and kneeling in the snow, the rifle-stock cuddled to my cheek. I remember wondering if the distance were not more than three hundred yards and if I had the sight a trifle fine; then the long wailing whine of the bullet, followed by the sheep's startled rush. A great form went plunging down the hillside in long easy leaps (they measured some of them over fourteen feet) half hidden in a whirling mass of snow; then the trees hid him from view and I knew that my last chance had gone.

For a time, when we reached the spot where he had stood, hope revived. Short stiff hairs were lying there, and a little patch of red stained the snow. Whilst the little patches continued in the

wake of those great leaps it seemed that my hope might be justified; but as the patches turned to spots, and the spots to specks, it flickered and died out. I will not tell you of the long walk home, which still haunts me like a nightmare; of the frozen river, on whose banks we wandered like a couple of lost souls about the Styx, seeking for a crossing; of the woods we passed, their blackened and ghastly pines, topped by a few stars, rising above us, and the white elusive snow beneath our feet; nor of the thankfulness with which we saw the camp fires gleaming beneath us beside the frozen creek. Through it all I had but one thought: that I had lost my ram! He may not have had the grand head with which I credited him; sometimes I try to console myself thus, though in my heart of hearts I know the consolation is but vain, for I do not think that sixteen inches would have spanned the girth of those horns. His head may hang in the halls of some stalker, who, more fortunate than I, could seize upon the chances which the gods presented; but I cannot help hoping that this is not so, and that when the spring comes again decking the hills with verdure, his limpid eyes may still look upon Yarlakan flushing pink at the greeting of the dawn, and that he may find the peace which came to me among the shadows which lurk about its base.

CHAPTER V

MULE DEER AND THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT

AFTER the loss of my big ram my luck changed, although I feared at first that I was still beneath a ban.

Two days after the events recorded in the last chapter, Henry and I went out in quest of goats, having moved our camp some distance down the valley. We found one, it is true, peering at us over some rocks. I had a shot and missed. It is a practice of mine to pull through my rifle after a shot. On this occasion the flannel at the end of my cleaner jammed on the bristle brush, and though we got the cord out all right the flannel and brush remained firmly fixed in the barrel of the rifle. The goat, meanwhile, watched us from a safe distance with a supercilious smile as much as to say, "What are those asses doing?" We, of course, had to return to camp. My knee was still painful and Henry had got his foot frostbitten in crossing the frozen river, so that we were not altogether sorry for a little extra rest. The next day, 21st November, I had what our keeper in Scotland would have called "a fearr-ful maa-ssacre!" We had to concentrate all our energies on goats and deer, for though Burton

had only got one ram, the season was getting very late and we feared the weather would break.

In some ways the Rocky Mountain goat is the most remarkable animal in North America. He is an anachronism; an unfortunate animal antedated for the age in which he lives, bearing to the mammals of his country the same relationship as does the pelican to the birds. They both in their respective spheres look as prehistoric as a non-bridgite at a fashionable dinner-party.

I shall not forget an evening as we fished on the Yellowstone Lake, watching one of these curious birds come sailing up out of the setting sun, uncouthly silhouetted against the fading light into the embodied semblance of a dragon in one of Mr. E. T. Reed's drawings of the stone age. Nor shall I forget my first view of *Oreamnos* in his native haunts amid the snow and rocks of British Columbia, looking very much at home and yet absurdly out of place; for I wondered as he stood there if he were not the shrunken degenerate of mighty ancestors, who, five or six times his own size, the companion of the mammoth and other beasts long dead, peopled the earth when she was still young. Now, with something of the monkey or performing poodle in his appearance, you half expect the strange beast who stares at you with such *sang-froid* to start exploiting drawing-room tricks for your edification; but he is a contradictory creature and you watch in vain. In the summer he falls an easy prey to

any wandering hunter, and you may expect four or five goats for one sheep; but, when the winter holds all the land in its iron grip, when the home of the winds stands empty and its masters are abroad, when the white elusive snow makes a delicate tracery on each wall-like cliff, it is another matter. His footsteps tell you that he is there, moving in his own mysterious way, but his coat, usually so conspicuous, hides him well and you may look long ere you find him.

For six of the long eleven days in which I had never fired a shot had I played at hide and seek with those elusive goats. Twice only, during that time, did I see one in the flesh, though their numerous tracks proved what adepts at the game they were. Silently and noiselessly they would vanish while we were yet afar off, doubtless laughing in their beards at the poor figures which we cut. Yet, as I said just now, they are contradictory beasts, for when at last my turn came, the goat at whom I fired stood there motionless and undisturbed, until my third shot sent him reeling down the hillside on the reddening snow. He may be a foolish animal, as some have said, or fearless, as I like to think, but he is interesting from whichever point of view you like to take him.

As a climber he has no equal, for, playfully and for sport, he will venture safely where even a bighorn, urged on by fear, would scarcely dare to go; and he never loses his head under the most trying

circumstances. A friend of mine told me that once, when hunting sheep, a blinding snowstorm came on. Shortly afterwards he encountered the band he was pursuing close to a precipice. He shot the ram, who, in his death leap, jumped clear over the precipice. The ewes, seeing their leader disappear, prompted by a blind impulse, followed one by one and so met their fate; it is impossible to imagine goats acting in a similar manner. Very rarely, I believe, they get stuck in a place in which they can neither go up nor down, forward nor back, and so perish; but such cases are quite exceptional. They fear nothing, and are at times determined fighters.

They have a curious gland behind each horn, whose function has yet to be ascertained. These glands are respectively smaller in the females than in the males, and though, in the mating season, they become somewhat enlarged, they have little or no scent. Indeed I was struck at the absence of any odour attached to these animals, for in the strength and quality of their *bouquet* they are far inferior to an old Highland billy I shot three years ago in Sutherlandshire. During the two years I was away his head and scalp were hanging up in a draught, yet even after that I have had to reluctantly abandon all thoughts of having it set up!

They are slow movers on level ground, indeed, Tyee Jimmy, a guide, lassoed one on the flats near Lillooet. They stand about thirty-six inches at the shoulder, weigh (roughly) three hundred pounds, and

owing to their long hair have the appearance of a double hump.

Of the two animals I actually saw with the Incompetent One, the first was miles away in an inaccessible place, safe if he choose to stay there until the era of flying machines. The second I caught a glimpse of for a brief moment on the sky-line. Even as I looked he dipped leisurely over the hill-top, and by the time we had arrived, breathless and panting, on the ridge, a line of tracks leading to the highest summits mutely told us that we had again been fooled.

In hunting, as in everything else, if you stick to it long enough, the luck is bound to change. I am the possessor of a good motto—"Sperandum Est"—so even though my first day with Henry in the new camp was a blank I hugged my motto to my heart. But one wants a lot of hope with the weather misty and cold, and the game on the alert, for when long deferred it certainly maketh the heart sick. It was about this time that the Incompetent One decided he would be more comfortable in Lillooet. The finishing touch to this decision was, as far as I could make out, applied by Burton.

He got stuck half-way up a chimney in the rocks and was balancing, in his own words, "on one toe and a little finger," and yelled to the Incompetent One to take the rifle and render some assistance. The latter, who was also in difficulties, retorted that he might get out as best he could. Burton, thinking that if he

Mule Deer

were going to be killed he might for once present the Incompetent One with his candid opinion of him, proceeded to do so with such directness and choice of diction that he didn't survive the shock and went back home. Bell turned up in a day or two so it was all right.

It had been snowing in the night, and as, on the morning of the 21st, we climbed the lower hill-slopes, showers of snow fell from the laden branches on our heads and necks. Wet and damp though we were, I could not find it in my heart to be angry, for it was a privilege to be alive in such a place. Then it became doubly worth living as Henry abruptly came to a stop, pointed to a little black dot which moved among the leafless clumps of bushes splashing the snow-laden hillside, and said "Good stag!" though how he could tell its quality at such a distance I don't know. To me it looked something like a small puppy seen through the wrong end of a telescope, though even then wonderfully sharp and clear. It was but little out of our way to go among those leafless clumps and I was very keen to get a stag, for mule deer are extremely graceful creatures and carry beautiful little heads.

I am ignorant whether any one has ever introduced them into a Highland deer forest. The climate of Scotland is not unlike that of British Columbia, and the deer, provided they could stand the damp, would be an ornament to any place.

The going was pretty bad and the snow frightfully slippery in places. It was almost impossible to

avoid making some noise, though Henry seemed to be able to walk as softly as a cat on almost any surface. We were aiming to cut diagonally across the line which the stag had marked out for himself when we last saw him, and were indeed on the fringe of the bushes when I sat down abruptly and very hard in the middle of a little frozen burn. While a cold chill slowly permeated the whole of my knickerbockers and being, I uttered not a sound; but when Henry turned round and made a face at me, endeavouring to comprise in one glance scorn at my clumsiness, fear that it had frightened the stag, warning not to repeat my performance, and confidence in his own ability to save himself from a similar mishap, it was too much for me and I snapped out, "You silly ass! I didn't do it on purpose!"

I had apparently frightened the stag, for, as I scrambled to my feet, twenty yards ahead of us there came a rush from behind a tree and a white patch disappeared from view. Henry was kneeling in the snow pointing with outstretched finger. So, pulling the cap from the rifle, I hurriedly joined him. Then very dimly through the brush I saw a moving form and took a hurried snap. Result—nil! Henry ran on, but I remained, for out of the tail of my eye I caught a glimpse of twinkling feet and beyond them a narrow opening, through which the snow gleamed white. I covered it with my sights and as a dark form obscured the pale background beyond, fired. No desperate flurry in the snow succeeded my shot,

and with very little hope in my luck I caught up with my companion. At his side, I enlarged upon the difficulties of hitting microscopic puppies, or even good stags, through intervening boughs; the slipperiness of frozen streams in general and my own misfortunes in particular. "If"—I began; but it is always "if" in hunting; what indeed would hunting be without it? He cut me short. In a perfectly colourless and even voice, unconscious of plagiarism, he remarked, "There's hair!" My arguments, unconvincing even to myself (N.B. Always keep your mouth shut when you've missed) came to an abrupt end. Not so the hair nor the great red splashes which besprinkled them.

"Why, you must have hit him!" cried Henry, as he saw the blood, experience (he remembered my big ram, the brute!) and incredulous hope struggling in his tone. I said nothing, and wished I had remained silent before. It would have been so much more satisfactory and impressive to have walked quietly up to the grey-brown mass which I could see lying motionless beneath a fir and to have regarded the little hole behind the shoulder as a matter of course. Still I had him, which was the chief thing, and Henry was magnanimous and said nothing. The head was a very pretty one, and as after hanging the dead beast up we glanced around before continuing our goat hunt, I had a sudden presentiment that my luck had really changed. And so it turned out.

An hour later we stood on the summit of a great encircling wall of rock which seemed to hem the valley in on three sides. For a while we stood looking out across the vast open space spread like a map before us. Then Henry nudged me. Quite three miles away on a rocky spur, snow-covered, but with a few dotted fir trees showing darkly against it, lay four goats. The big white billy who stood on guard beneath one of these firs almost hid the nanny from view; but two younger goats stood out plainly half way down the spur.

Very far off a distant range of mountains broke the horizon, their summits white and glistering. Cut off from these by long-drawn cloudy streamers, which trailed laggard up the valley, great blue-green abysses yawned, crested with pines whose spiky tops, even at that distance, showed hard and sharp against the background of mist. It was these wonderful pines which gave the great hollows in the hills their vivid colour, and made one think that he was looking down into some sea pool whose depths had never yet been fathomed. Closer at hand a whole hillside had been swept bare by some forgotten fire, and on its shroud of white the late sun threw from each blackened pine stem a line, so black and distinct that save for the angle it was hard to tell substance from shadow, or the phantom forest from that which gave it birth. At the foot of this slope lay a little mountain burn, silent in its long winter's sleep, yet twisting its course in and out

below the fallen timber and round the foot of the spur, far below the point at which the goats lay blinking in the sun. They do not care much for moving in the daytime, and do most of their travelling at night. I would have given much to have seen them at such a time moving like great white spectres about the tops, looking the rightful owners of the vast spaces over which they moved, their grotesque outlines softened and subdued in the light of the moon. There was nothing fairy-like about them as they lay there on the spur. The nanny stretched herself like a great tired dog, and the big billy stood over her. One of the smaller goats, poised on a pinnacle of rock, looked meditatively into the valley below. For a long time he stood there, unheeding of his brother on the slope above, then slowly turned his head. Straight between his forelegs, apparently, he saw what he wanted; for slowly and without haste he hunched up his hind-quarters and solemnly slid down ten feet of perpendicular rock. Then seeing nothing out of the ordinary in so startling a performance, he put down his head and quietly commenced to feed.

The sky had become overcast and clouds hid the sun. It was not so warm on the spur as it had been earlier in the day. The goats seemed to realise this, for they left the shelter of the fir tree and began to slowly move down the hillside. Presently there came a faint moaning in the tree-tops

and little white flecks began to fall, at first gently and silently as though they loved the errand upon which they came, but later hard and fast with a kind of fierce blinding insistence which hid everything from view. Out of the grey nothingness beyond the deadened pines, came that terrible ceaseless stream of floating flakes. They drifted away among the yet uncovered patches of rock and shrouded the mantled ground in an even deeper pall of white. From the ridge-tops the wind, boisterous and not to be denied, whirled wisps of snow, weaving them into fantastic shapes as of dead Indian hunters and the beasts which they pursued. In among the deadened pines vanished these strange phantoms, the creatures of a breath, whilst their creator roared and blustered down the rocky gorges with an angry moan. Behind the great grey mass from which the spur thrust itself, the narrow gulch rose steeply on either hand. Rocky buttresses thrust their battlemented tops above its sides and over the straggling firs which clung so desperately about them; enormous boulders filled its bed; whilst here and there vast colourless slides, hundreds of yards across and a mile or more in length, drove steeply down between its frowning walls. It was a scene of desolate loneliness which would have been hard to equal.

So indeed I thought as I stood shivering in a narrow ledge, a precipice on one side and a towering wall of smooth rock on the other. A line of

firm broad tracks led between, and following these I found myself at length in safety. It was still so bitterly cold that I could hardly hold the rifle, but the storm was passing, and as we came in sight of the valley again the sun was shining. The wind had gone too, leaving in its place a gentle breeze. From the blackened branches of the deadened pine trees it blew little puffs of snow, sending them forth upon adventurous voyages like a miniature fleet of white-winged ships. Great white fluffy masses of cloud came shooting up out of the blue beyond in a manner which you may look for, but will not see, in the low countries. The phantom right-angled forest appeared again on the burnt ridge as if by magic; hardly a sound broke the stillness, and the valley looked much as it had done an hour or so earlier; only we were much closer to the spur. Up the glen the sun showed shyly from behind a bank of cloud and lit up the distant snow-covered peaks. From every ridge, or so it seemed, wisps of smoke were blowing, here, long and full-drawn; there, broad and compressed. In a hollow a castle hospitably smoked, the fumes from a dozen chimneys melting among the pines; from a rocky promontory over yonder fleecy puffs shot forth from old-time cannon welcoming a victorious general back from the wars. A dozen lesser ridges flaunted pearl-grey wreaths, as though from lowland steadings, ravaged in those days when Grierson of Lag rode forth in the king's name, or that Douglas called

the Black went foraging abroad beyond his border keep. Down the glen little specks of light were dancing, and involuntarily one listened for the distant roll of the drums or the wild and matchless music of the pipes. An eagle startled from his coign of vantage sailed gracefully across the valley and lit on a rock. Dissatisfied with his position he lurched heavily off and lumbered clumsily up the hill across an open patch of ground. His awkward waddle robbed him of all majesty, and it was hard to recognise him as the same bird. The goats saw him but hardly turned their heads, all unconscious of the two dark figures who had caused his flight.

We were on the spur now. In front of us lay a big slide of loose rock varying in size from huge boulders to tiny splinters of shale. Across this, very gingerly and carefully, we had to pick our way. The goats were not in sight, but as a piece of loose stone went clattering down the slide Henry turned with a quick, silent gesture. A tall pointed peak reared itself fifty yards above the fir tree beneath which the billy had been standing, but one of the younger goats stood there now. The others had filed away down the hill leaving the bed beneath the tree tenantless.

We gained the peak in safety and I took a cautious peep. The goat was quietly feeding.

At the first sharp crack he merely raised his head. At the second he looked up. Then he went rolling down the hillside, striking vainly for a foothold with

his short stocky legs but failing to find one. The other goats had scattered at the noise and stir about the peak, and now the smaller billy stood poised above the burn, looking back across his shoulder. As the shot struck him he sprang off and out, down into the silent burn which lay so far below, leaving behind him a smudged blot disfiguring to the cliff. On the hillside above another shot rang out and the nanny fell forward with a gasp, a dark trickle beneath her staining the whiteness of the snow.

Only the old billy stood there looking out across the valley where he had lived so long, his head up and his white beard blowing in the wind. On a sudden there came a shooting pain through his shoulder, and turning he began to clamber up the hill. It seemed steeper than in the morning and the sun to have lost its warmth, but he struggled gamely on though his feet grew very heavy. The pain in his shoulder throbbed painfully and his head began to sing. As he stopped to look back, the hills which he knew so well seemed very, very far away, but dimly he was conscious of two dark figures which came towards him over the snow. Instinctively recognising them as enemies he turned in a last gallant effort to elude them. The friendly rocks just hid him from their view; then his legs began to totter, he grew deadly faint and very quietly and gently lay over on his side and was still. There a few moments later we found him.

CHAPTER VI

NEW ZEALAND RED DEER

FROM the Liverpool docks to the "Long White Cloud" is a far cry; but the wandering sportsman will find in New Zealand more to make him feel at home than in many a country closer to his doors. The Misses Dare and Marie Studholme greet him with the same generous dental display from every third shop window he passes as they do in the streets of London themselves; the very names of the streets and towns, in the South Island at any rate, if he be one of the fortunate minority hailing from the north of the Tweed, bring back to him the scenes with which he is most familiar; the accent of those whom he meets falls on his ear with an insistence the more pleasing from the fact that he last heard it so many thousands of miles away; whilst if he be a deer-stalker he may find without much difficulty many another addicted to his favourite pursuit and well read in the classics of a sport which has no equal.

Fifty years ago there was not a stag in New Zealand; now it is one of the finest deer-stalking countries in the world, and the heads obtained there would, alas! put to shame every deer forest in Scotland.



The Record New Zealand Head
Killed by Mr. H. E. Hodgkinson in the Dingle Valley, April 1902.



Head of Rocky Mountain Goat (*young male*). (*See page* 77)

There are three main herds in the two islands, namely, the Wairarapa, Nelson, and Otago. Perhaps I should have said four, for in the Rakaia Gorge, Canterbury, during the last two years some remarkable heads have been obtained about which I shall have something to say presently.

A stag and two hinds landed in February, 1861, from Lord Petre's park in Essex, were the progenitors of the Nelson herd, and consequently the first deer to be imported into the Colony. Of their descendants I cannot speak from personal experience. I saw some fifteen or twenty heads, and they were almost without exception narrow, ugly, and unsymmetrical. The herd is now working inland, and I hear that some good stags have lately been killed, though they do not approach the Otago heads in length nor span; nor those from Wairarapa in weight.

A common weakness in the heads obtained in the Nelson district is the absence of bays. This characteristic is also noticeable in some of the Wairarapa stags. The Rev. C. Oliver attributes the narrow span of these heads to "rigid adherence to original type." In this I do not agree with him, though it may be a contributory cause. The country abounds in bush, and environment is much more likely to be the predominating factor in determining the type of head than heredity. I had a great argument on a similar point with Mr. E. Hardcastle, who knows as much about deer as any one in New Zealand.

The characteristics of the Wairarapa heads as distinguished from those in Otago are heavier beam and a larger number of points, in fact they resemble English park deer, or German heads.

The Otago stags, on the other hand, have as a rule greater length of horn and finer span. Now Mr. Hardcastle, like Mr. Oliver, maintains that this is due to "adherence to type." He argues that a Wairarapa stag transferred to Otago, or *vice versâ* an Otago stag put down in the Wairarapa, would maintain each its own type of head. In other words, that heredity is the only thing that counts in settling the formation of a stag's antlers.

I am compelled to entirely disagree. The effect of climate and food on the growth of a stag's horns is well seen in Mr. Lucas's herd of red deer at Warnham. I see no reason why a similar change should not have taken place in the Windsor deer imported to the Wairarapa. The ground there is covered with bush, and its limestone formation would lead a naturalist to forecast that the type of head grown by the stags there would be exactly what it is.

Three of the Wairarapa heads in the Christchurch Exhibition had those bifurcations emanating from the back of the main beam on one horn which Mr. J. G. Millais has alluded to as being so characteristic of certain park deer and for which high feed is responsible. In Northern Otago, on the other hand, the country is more or less wild and open, and the

result is seen in the heads of the stags obtained there.

I am strongly of the opinion that if a stag from the Wairarapa was turned out in Otago, in a few years, so far as his head was concerned, it would be impossible to distinguish him from any other stag there. Similarly an Otago stag transferred to the Wairarapa would grow an altogether heavier head than he would do in the South Island. At the request of Mr. Leonard Tripp, a keen North Island stalker, I was instrumental in obtaining two stags and six hinds from Warnham, which arrived safely in Wellington last September (1907). If only the Otago Acclimatisation Society had, at the same time, imported some of Mr. Lucas's deer to Otago, I venture to think that in a few years they would have proved my argument.

A short account of the origin of the Wairarapa herd may be forgiven me. In 1862, by an arrangement with the late Prince Consort, who was the first man to make deer-stalking a fashionable sport, Mr. John Morrison, the then New Zealand Government agent in London, forwarded six deer to the Colony. A stag and two hinds were shipped by the *Triton* to Wellington. One stag and one hind arrived safely on 1st June, after a passage lasting over four months. The three remaining deer had been sent to Canterbury, but two of them succumbed on the voyage. The survivor, a hind, was accordingly sent to Wellington to join the two landed

from the *Triton*. Early in 1863 they were liberated on a Mr. Carter's run. In 1906 the number of deer on Mr. Riddiford's run was estimated at over 10,000. Indeed, to such an extent had they increased, that the authorities gave orders for a large number of hinds to be killed.

The only stag of the trio liberated was well known. He turned nasty in his old age, and, gallantry not being his strong point, charged an unfortunate lady and compelled her to take refuge beneath a house, which, fortunately for her, was built on piles. This exploit settled his fate, and in April, 1873, he died the death. His head is now at Palmerston North.

Five or six years ago the whole district, including the Government reserve of 32,000 acres, was open to sportsmen; but the privilege was much abused, indeed I believe two so-called sportsmen killed something like a hundred stags, chiefly young deer, in a few weeks, and the run-holders very naturally closed their ground to all save their personal friends and those having proper introductions. There is some talk of the Government reserve being thrown open again, but until this takes place I should like to warn sportsmen who wish to stalk in the North Island that it is a very difficult matter, unless they have introductions to one of the big run-holders. This, indeed, is the only fault which I have to find with the Tourist Department of New Zealand. They do not in their publications say in

so many words that any one can stalk in the Wairarapa, but that is the impression left on the reader's mind; and when, as at the time of writing, practically the whole stalking area is in private hands, they have no business to mention it at all. One other word of advice I should like to give. Find out definitely when the stalking season opens in the various districts, as it is very liable to be changed. Mr. T. E. Donne, whose kindness to me was unfailing, is only too willing to render any assistance in his power to visiting sportsmen, and the same may be said of the secretaries of the various Acclimatisation Societies.

The North and South Island deer-stalkers are both very jealous of the prestige of their herds, and a fierce discussion was raging when I was in Wellington as to the purity of descent of the Wairarapa deer. The champion of the South threw out dark hints about the bar-sinister and unauthorised German alliances in the past. The gentleman who took up the cause of those on whom such aspersions were cast, demanded proof and dates; these were given and refuted, but, to make a long story short, it was pretty conclusively proved that German blood had crept into the Windsor herd. One well-known stalker in the North Island, whose hatred of things "made in Germany" is well known, was so overcome at learning the verdict that he was heard to declare that his stalking days were over!

The third and, to the Scottish deer-stalker, most

interesting herd of red deer is found in the South Island in Northern Otago. The two stags and five hinds presented to the Otago Acclimatisation Society by the Earl of Dalhousie in 1870, were liberated on the Morven hills, and their descendants are the only deer in New Zealand who can claim pure Scottish descent. Their present numbers are estimated at 10,000. I was very fortunate in visiting New Zealand when I did, as, at the Exhibition held at Christchurch, were heads to the number of a hundred, collected from all over the Colony. They were extremely well arranged, and included some magnificent specimens. One in particular attracted universal admiration, and is, in my opinion, the finest wild stag ever shot in New Zealand. This was Mr. H. E. Hodgkinson's royal. The Exhibition did not include the head of a 16-pointer killed by a poacher in the Dingle Valley near Lake Hawea, and sold for £7, 10s. to a local stalker, who in turn resold it to the late A. R. Blackwood, a well-known Melbourne sportsman. The horn of this stag was 42 inches in length, which is the only measurement I have, though those who have seen it say it is an even better head than the royal mentioned above. It is hard for an enthusiast to speak in moderate terms of this grand head, combining, as it does, long well-developed tines, with great length, heavy beam, and unusual, indeed record, spread; no unworthy headpiece for even Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen." Only in one particular should I like to see an alteration, and that is in the







1. Royal killed in the Rakaia Gorge, Canterbury, by A. E. G. Rhodes, 1907. Length, 40½″. Span (over all), 41″. Beam 6⅞″.

2. Royal killed Timaru Creek, N. Otago, by Melville Gray, 1901. Length, 46″. Span (over all), 38½″. Beam 5½″.

3. Sixteen-pointer killed in the Rakaia Gorge, Canterbury, by R. H. Rhodes, 1908. Length, 41″. Span (over all), 41″. Beam 6″.

4. Fourteen-pointer killed in the Hunter Valley, N. Otago, by the author, 1907. Length, 37½″. Span (inside), 36½″. Beam 4½″.

5. Royal killed in the Upper Dingle, W. Otago, by E. Hardcastle. Length, 38″. Span (over all), 35″. Beam 5″.

6. Sixteen-pointer killed in the Dingle by a poacher, 1900. Length, 42″.

SOME TYPICAL NEW ZEALAND HEADS (South Island)

tops. There is no sign of a cup, indeed a cup is very rare in Otago heads, and it is with regard to this point that I differ with Mr. E. Hardcastle, when he says that the Otago deer perpetuate the true Scottish type. The left bay point is a little weak, but the horns otherwise a nearly perfect match. At any rate, it is as nearly the perfect normal head of a wild stag as one can expect to find in this wicked world.

A royal killed by Mr. Melville Gray was also a beautiful head, very much of the same type as the former, though with a slight falling-off in the brows and bays; again, there were no cups. On these Otago heads I noticed that sometimes there was an attempt at a cup on one side, but two really well-developed cups, as one sees in a good Scottish head, were extremely rare. Indeed I never saw such a head. Mr. C. D. Hodgkinson exhibited a very fine 14-pointer, and these three heads would be hard to beat.

There were, however, some other good heads, including a royal killed by Mr. Hardcastle, perhaps the prettiest head of the lot, and a 16-pointer killed by Mr. W. Allan at 500 yards with a Snider carbine and no fore-sight. A fluke is a hard thing to define, but for a concrete example this would take a lot of beating!

I have alluded to some heads obtained in the Rakaia Gorge, Canterbury. Ten years ago the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society obtained some

deer from England. None were allowed to be killed until last year (1907) when four stags were shot. In this district the winter is rather shorter than in Otago, the grass feed not so good, and bush feeding much better. The stags killed there so far have carried the heaviest heads in New Zealand, a remarkable point about them being the extraordinary length of the brow tines. They cannot strictly speaking be regarded as wild deer, but I include their measurements with those of some other heads at the end of the chapter as showing what good feed and shelter will do for a stag. It is but rarely that a New Zealand stag is weighed. The nature of the country precludes it. Ponies, as a rule, are not available, and the stalker and his guide have to carry any portion of the venison they may want into camp themselves. From rough estimates, however, 30-stone stags must be fairly numerous in both islands. A stag killed in 1904 near Lake Hawea reached the enormous weight of 44 stones 4 lbs. Such monsters must be very unusual, even in New Zealand. I know of one which was vouched for as scaling 35 stones 10 lbs., and another killed, I think, by Mr. A. E. Leatham, of 26 stones 8 lbs. New Zealand deer undoubtedly are bigger than Scottish red deer, though I confess that on the hill this fact did not strike me as much as I had anticipated. I give some measurements of two stags supplied to me by Mr. Hardcastle.

Seventeen-pointer killed in the Dingle by H. E. Hodgkinson :—

Length, tip of nose to root of tail	96	inches.
Height at shoulder	56	"
Girth	60	"
A very heavy stag killed in the Nelson district by Rev. W. C. Oliver taped from the tip of the nose to the root of tail	108	"

A twelve-pointer I killed in the Dingle last year (1907) measured as follows :—

Length—Tip of nose to root of tail (straight line)	74	inches.
Height—At shoulder (this allowed for his weight when standing upright)	48	"
Girth—Behind shoulder	53	"

Measurement of a nine-pointer killed in the Dingle by the author, 1907.

Length—Tip of nose to root of tail (straight line)	75	inches.
Height—At shoulder (allowing for weight when standing)	46	"
Girth—Behind shoulder	57	"

The other two stags I killed were in an impossible position for taking measurements.

We had originally intended stalking in the Wairarapa, as the season there is supposed to open considerably earlier than in Otago, where we meant to finish. Circumstances which I have already mentioned prevented this. Poor Burton got laid up in Christchurch, and though I didn't much like leaving him we decided it would be better for me to go on and get to the ground, as otherwise there might be no ground left for us to get to, the amount of stalking being very limited. If the numbers of visiting sportsmen go on increasing

some different arrangements will have to be made, for the ground at present open will only provide sport for a limited minority. In Christchurch I had met Mr. Arthur Hawley, with whom we had crossed from Sydney, and he being bound on the same errand we left together. From Dunedin we went by rail to Kingston and took a small steamer up Lake Wakatip to Queenstown. The scenery was very beautiful, not unlike Scotland though on a larger scale, minus the heather. From Queenstown a coach took us to Pembroke, a dear little place on Lake Wanaka, with a most delightful inn. From here we intended to make our real start. An amusing incident occurred during our drive. Along the side of the road lay a miscellaneous collection of large flat stones. A religious fanatic had passed along, as was evident from the obtrusive texts with which he had ornamented each suitable rock. One in particular, with a nice, smooth flat surface, had given him just the chance he wanted. "How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" stared at us in huge letters. Shortly after the departure of the text enthusiast had followed a dealer in rabbit poison. He too had remarked the admonitions with which his predecessor had improved the shining hour, and being a gentleman of some humour had resolved to seize upon so good an opportunity for furthering the sale of rabbit poison. Noticing the startling query which had attracted our attention, he had replied by writing in bold letters underneath, "Use Ajax Rabbit Poison!" The precise method he did not specify.

Talking of rabbits recalls a burning topic of Colonial conversation to mind. In England *Lepus Cuniculus* is regarded as a useful adjunct towards making up the day's bag, or an ornamental addition to the landscape as he plays in front of the windows, while the ladies say, "Oh! look at the darlings!"

The persons I suppose who arrive more nearly at the estimate at which he is held in the Antipodes, are a keeper trying to break in a young dog, and a gardener with a convenient piece of ground nicely planted with young lettuces! It is difficult for any one else save those who have seen rabbits in a country where every natural feature tends to foster their love for mathematical progression to have a conception of the hatred which flares up whenever they are mentioned. Nothing is bad enough for them, and though some of the means taken to ensure their destruction are, unfortunately, cruel, it is absolutely impossible to keep their increase in check by fair means or foul. One can have but little feeling where they are concerned, save sympathy for the unfortunate beings to whom they are a veritable Egyptian plague. In Australia many a man has been ruined by them, though it is hard to believe; but, this realised, the hatred in which they are held and the means devised for their destruction come more within the scope of one's understanding. I know of big run-holders who spend £5000 annually in an endeavour to exterminate them, and yet they increase! Were it

not so, 10,000 sheep more would find pasture on the stations of which I am speaking.

One hears vaguely in England of great rabbit drives, and enormous figures of the slain are quoted, but in the majority of cases they convey no definite realisation of the difficulties with which an Australian or New Zealand run-holder has to contend. It needs the faculty of sight to bring it home. When, in addition to shooting, trapping, snaring or other methods of destruction, you see poison carts starting off every morning on their deadly round, you begin to know what that slang expression of disbelief "Rabbits!" may mean to a Colonial.

A word as to poison carts. They are lightly constructed machines which plough a narrow furrow about one inch deep and an inch or so in width. Into this furrow at intervals of about a yard a small pellet of poison is automatically dropped. The size of this pellet can be regulated by enlarging or diminishing the slot through which it passes. The poison used is phosphorus mixed with pollard into a kind of paste. This method strikes a stranger as being cruel, for the rabbits after eating it do not die at once. Its advantages, however, are undeniable, for the poor little beasts are very fond of phosphorus and eat it readily in dry weather, when they are unable to get fresh green food. In addition to this the action of the poison diminishes to a great extent any unpleasant smell which their sudden demise might occasion. It has one great disadvantage. In a drought, when they



Lake Hawea
Looking down the Hunter Valley



A Poison Cart

are unable to get any food, sheep eat the poisoned rabbits and so die themselves.

In New Zealand the authorities have imported cats, stoats, weasels, ferrets, and a variety of other noxious beasts in the vain hope of aiding their extermination. The rabbits are as numerous as ever, the only result being that the wingless, and nearly every ground-nesting bird has been exterminated.

RAKAIA GORGE, CANTERBURY

Points.	Length.	Span over all.	Span inside.	Beam.	Killed by	Remarks.
12	40½	41	33½	6⅞	A. E. G. Rhodes.	1907. Brows, 17" and 17". Weight of skull, 22 lbs.
12	47½	37¼	...	7	G. Gerard.	1907. Weight of skull, 21 lbs.
16	41	41	...	6	R. H. Rhodes.	1908. Brows, 17¼" and 16". Weight of skull, 21 lbs.
			NORTH OTAGO			
12	46	42	37½	5¼	H. E. Hodgkinson.	1902.
12	46	38½	31	5½	Melville Gray.	1901.
12	45	36	27¾	5¾	H. E. Hodgkinson.	1901.
12	45	34	...	5	Major Cliff.	1903.
11	44	38	...	5¼	A. E. Leatham.	1901.
15	44	40	...	5½	A. Cowie, jun.	1908.
16	42	...	...	...	Killed by a poacher.	
14	41¼	39½	33½	5¼	C.D.Hodgkinson.	
16	41	37¼	29½	5¼	W. Allan.	
18	41	38	...	5⅝	Baron Von Kusserov.	1908.

I have the measurements of eighteen other heads killed in Otago with a length of over 40 inches.

CHAPTER VII

NEW ZEALAND DEER-STALKING

On 1st April I left the Dingle hut with Buckley, my guide, and Donald, whom I engaged under the delusion that he could cook. With Buckley I got on very well. Donald was a splendid example of the worst type of Colonial. Obstinate, ignorant, and narrow-minded, he imagined that the world revolved around the particular circle of which he, in his own estimation, was the admired centre. Now, having nothing particular to do, he had condescended as a favour to come with us in the laudable endeavour, I should imagine, to rid the world of two of the detested Britishers. As Buckley pithily remarked, he had nothing to do and did less! Rows were constant, as was inevitable when we found the only bit of meat in camp lying beside a filthy frying-pan, exposed to any of the elements which chose to visit them. He was the one ugly blot on an otherwise enjoyable trip. He finally went—but that was later.

Our camp was on the edge of the bush on the steep side of a thickly-wooded glen, which ran at right angles to the Dingle Valley. Hawley's was about a mile away over the main ridge which we



Stalking Ground in North Otago



Evening in the Dingle Valley

took as our march. We heard a great many stags roaring, but they obstinately refused to come out of the bush. Indeed, during the whole fortnight we were at this camp, I only saw about two good stags in the open, though Burton was more fortunate. The cunning old brutes used to give their hinds an airing just before the dawn broke, and then hustle them back into the forest where they spent the day, and whence their angry roars only served to exasperate us. "Bush" in New Zealand is only another name for forest, composed for the most part of a tree known as "white birch," though really, I believe, a kind of beech. Deer are fond of its leaves, which, with snow-grass, celmesias, and various herbs, form their favourite food. The undergrowth is horrible stuff, made up in many parts of a long clinging green creeper, locally spoken of as "lawyer." It has all the vices of its class with none of the virtues.

The ground in Otago is very rough, far more so than in any part of Scotland in which I have ever stalked. It consists mostly of big corries, the lower slopes covered with bush and minuka scrub, the upper tops of loose slides of rough shale, granite, and large boulders. These alternate with tracts of snow-grass, whose great flaunting tufts are so distinctive a feature in the scenery of the South Island. They make terrible walking, being very slippery, and until you know your way about are apt to bring one into closer contact with Mother Earth than is either

pleasant or desirable. By the way, when walking along a steep hillside, carry your rifle in the outside hand, as in the event of a fall it is less likely to get damaged.

I heard a good story of one man, apropos of the walking. Beautifully curled and oiled, like unto an Assyrian bull, in an immaculate new "suiting" and drab spats, on the morning after their arrival in camp he prepared to sally forth, accompanied by his guide. The Otago hills are no child's play, most of the peaks running from five to seven thousand feet in height. The guide prepared to mount one of these.

"You're never going up there!" exclaimed the horrified stalker.

The guide, in a cutting tone, inquired if he preferred stalking along the river-bed.

"Oh! very well," said his gentleman, in the tone of an early Christian martyr.

For an hour, puffing and panting, he struggled up the hill, towing himself from tuft to tuft of snow-grass and at intervals receiving assistance from the guide. At last they came to a big slide of rock. The guide was half-way up it when he looked back. On its edge stood the stalker, "shivering on the brink" and in obvious fear of launching away. His clothes were torn and dirty; his beautifully curled locks were falling over his empurpled visage, and he was streaming with perspiration. Altogether he presented a very different appearance to the spick-and-span gentleman who had started to make the

ascent. The sorry figure touched the guide's heart. Retracing his steps he cleared a little foothold on the slide, and then remarked encouragingly, "Come along, just put your foot there and you'll be all right!"

His companion gave one piteous glance at the rocks above, and then gasped out: "Do you take me for a goat?"

That ended his stalking experiences.

From our camp we could hear stags roaring continually, but never a one worth shooting showed himself. Stags roar more in rough weather with lots of wind and rain than at any other time, and particularly in the early morning and late evening. When lying down the roar is subdued and has a moaning note, being altogether a lazier and more muffled sound. When standing up to roar a stag lowers his head below the line of the back, with the neck stretched out and up; when lying the neck is pointed up, with the horns lying back over the shoulders. Instead of a regular roar a stag sometimes emits a succession of grunts. I once watched a stag roaring through my glass at a distance of about a hundred and fifty yards. He first put his tongue out, and then drew it in until the tip rested against the front teeth in his lower jaw. Then he roared. He always did this before each successive roar. They roared all night, stopping about 6.30 or 7 o'clock in the morning. As a rule, 10 o'clock started them off for another hour. They were then

quiet till about 3.30, when they kept it up intermittently until the next morning.

Against the green grass-covered hills the deer appeared a very vivid red, much more so than in Scotland, where they blend in with their surroundings to a greater extent. Many of the stags had very red horns, due to the rubbing on the pitch-pine trees, of which they are fond. After comparing my New Zealand heads with those of Scottish red deer I find that the hair of the former is considerably coarser in texture.

On 5th April Burton arrived, having quite recovered. I had been working hard but had got nothing. He was luckier, for the second day out he killed a very pretty ten-pointer. Try as I would I could not find a good stag in the open. Every morning and every evening Buckley and I would sally forth to some coign of vantage above the bush. Every day we would return empty-handed. If ever a roar was heard away up on the hillside the glass invariably revealed some wretched monstrosity who had developed his voice at the expense of his head. Indeed most of these young stags were regular Carusos, and would have been no disgrace in point of voice capacity to a travelling menagerie of lions, and we got heartily sick of it. After a time conversation became spasmodic and monosyllabic. Down in the bush some apparent monster would begin roaring. Out would come our glasses. Then this sort of thing would ensue:



SPYING FOR DEER



A STALKER'S CAMP (*see page* 105)
Showing the nature of the ground and tussocks of snow-grass

SELF. That sounds like a good stag!

BUCKLEY. Yes!

Something dark would appear on the edge of the bush.

SELF. There are the hinds.

Assent from Buckley. Tentative advance of hinds and more roars from the bush, during which the hinds continued to timidly move forward.

SELF. He's getting closer.

BUCKLEY. Yes!

SELF (*hopefully*). He must be a good stag with that roar.

BUCKLEY. Yes!

Terrific roars from the bush. Excitement at fever heat. Hinds looked round as a big bulk looms out of the surrounding shadows. Up go our glasses.

CHORUS. D—n! and exit in disgust.

At last I could stand it no longer, and resolved to have a try for one in the bush. The first day was a blank, and beyond tearing our clothes and gaining huge appetites we did nothing.

A few days later we were tempted to repeat the experiment. I had in the interval spied a stag from the camp and killed him after an easy stalk. He carried a rather remarkable head, having seven points on his left horn and five on his right. His extra point, however, instead of being on the crown as one would expect, was situated just above the bay tine. I have never seen a similar wild

head, and Mr. Millais tells me he only knows of two wild Scottish stags with a similar formation.

At first it was all plain sailing though the slope was steep; then the undergrowth threw out a few tentative feelers, and finding them successful finally involved us in a mass of "lawyers," creepers, and scraping branches. For some forty minutes or so we wallowed and crawled until we struck the course of a small burn and were at liberty to follow it in comparative comfort.

"Ugh-h-h-r-r-r!" went an old hind almost in my very ear. We both remained motionless.

"Ugh-h-r-r-r-r-r!" persisted the old hind.

"Oh! you old beast!" muttered Buckley.

Thump, thump, thump with her forefoot from the hind, who made a stately move forward, thrust her head over a bush, and indulged in a long penetrating stare at the two cowering objects before her. Then, still in a very dignified manner, she minced slowly off, muttering to herself and barking loudly. She must have kept it up for quite twenty minutes, but the bush was so thick we never saw her again.

Cautiously we proceeded up our stream, coming on charming little woodland glades, rich with luxuriant grasses and shaded by moss-grown branches.

Then the longed-for roar, this time unmistakably a good stag came down the hill to us.

"He's coming!" said Buckley. Coming he certainly was, until at last we could plainly hear his

heavy breathing though he was still quite invisible. We were rather above him and a thick grove of trees separated us from the little burn. Very gingerly I crawled down, advancing a few feet at a time, gaining a little with each fresh roar.

Suddenly, right in the middle of a hoarse grunt, he broke off and a little crack came from behind me. Never moving, I peered through the interlacing branches, but not a thing could I see, though I knew that he still stood here listening. The sunlight fell slanting through the beech tops and splashed the grass with gold. As I watched a grey patch on which the sun fell moved ever so slightly. Quite noiselessly the grey patch grew. Then the tip of a horn glinted dully white; from behind a tree trunk developed a twitching nose and dripping mouth. They in turn enlarged in a swollen neck, black, and matted with muddy sweat. Then, last of all, what I waited for.

A red streak suddenly showed in his side and he went crashing through the trees whilst I followed. At the stream he paused, and while he hesitated, a second shot brought him down. His nine points were not large, but for all that he was an exceptional stag, with a length of horn of forty-one and a half inches.

However, to appreciate this kind of shooting one has to have been brought up to it, and Burton and I accordingly resolved to try our luck in the Hunter Valley, which runs parallel with the Dingle.

Hawley came over to lunch before we left and compared notes. He found a stag which had been caught by its neck in a tree and so strangled, and obtained an excellent photograph. Buckley told me he came across a similar case once, the stag having been caught by its leg. More extraordinary still, within a quarter of a mile of the unfortunate animal and in the same patch of bush was a hind in a similar predicament. Hawley had killed two ten-pointers, one of them a very pretty head, and an eleven-pointer. His camp was a pleasing contrast to our own, everything being beautifully neat and tidy. He was very fortunate in securing the services of a most excellent cook and guide, nor did he have Donald to contend with!

As the next week was a somewhat eventful one in a mild kind of way, I will extract some remarks from my diary.

Monday, April 15th.—Bill (the packer) arrived about eleven o'clock, Buckley and I meeting him on our way down the Minuka Spur. We stalked our way down to the Dingle Hut but saw no good beasts on the way. When within a mile or two of the Hut we heard a stag roaring, and sat down to watch for him. The light was getting very bad and he was a long time showing. At length I saw him standing on the edge of a big slide, and made him out an eleven-pointer or a royal. He continued to roar for some time but finally made his way back into the bush. By



None but the Brave deserve the Fair

that time it was nearly dark, and would have been quite by the time we had waded the river and got up to where he was; so we were obliged to get on down.

Burton came in about 7.30 with a good ten-pointer he had killed in the bush. This turned out to be his best head; a very nice rough horn with a length of thirty-eight inches though somewhat narrow in span. Shortly after shooting it they had heard another stag roaring, so Duncan (his guide) put the head down whilst they stalked it. The stalk was a failure; so was Duncan's memory, for he could not remember where he had put down the head, nor on which side of a small burn it was. They searched for three hours and had given up the job in despair, when quite by chance they stumbled across it on their way down the hill.

It was dark by the time they reached the river-bed, which, at the point they struck it, is very wide. They had scrambled along over the boulders and rocks with which their course was strewn for some distance, when they saw a dark object lying on the stones in front of them. This presently resolved itself into a sleeping stag, who, hearing them approach, jumped up, and disappeared. They hadn't seen the last of him, however, for a little later they encountered him again, apparently very much annoyed at having been roused from his beauty sleep, and determined to wreak vengeance on some one. Seeing them, it seemed to think they would be suitable

objects on which to make a start, and advanced with lowered head. Burton threw a stone and hit it in the flank; but this had no effect, and the animal advanced a few paces nearer and stood swaying its head from side to side a few inches off the ground. As some one had to go and the stag seemed disposed to give no quarter, Burton fired a shot but without effect. The stag still advanced, until a second shot took him in the chest and finished him off. I saw him the next day where he had fallen. He had a small head of six points and was obviously a young beast. This is the only really well-authenticated instance I can vouch for of a wild stag attacking a man; for I think that there is very little doubt he would have charged if left to himself. Instances of tame deer attacking people are common, and one poor fellow at least met his death in this way in Scotland. Most likely the darkness and time of year had something to do with this six-pointer's boldness, for it is extremely unlikely that any wild stag, however much worked up by passion, would attack a man in broad daylight.

April 16th.—After a somewhat restless night (there were about twelve people sleeping in a hut not much more than fourteen feet by twenty-five feet) Buckley and I started at 5.30 to try for the eleven-pointer we had seen on the preceding evening.

It was quite dark when we left, but after crossing the river and getting some way up the hillside the day broke. It was a "saft" morning, the ground

wet under foot and the hills swathed in mist. A walk of two hours brought us to the edge of the bush. There was no roaring to guide us, but as we passed along above its edge a fine stag walked out and stood looking at us.

"It's the big stag," said Buckley, "shoot him!" But I thought otherwise, and a look through the glass confirmed my opinion. He was a good stag, however, a nine-pointer, but not good enough to shoot with our big beast, perhaps, waiting round the corner. It was very hot and muggy, so on reaching a strip of undergrowth and bushes, we sat down to get cooled. All this time the nine-pointer had stood within three hundred yards watching us pass along the hill above him, showing no signs of fear, and making no effort to remove himself.

Stags in the rutting season, especially those which are looking for hinds, show very little fear of man, and will often watch a stalker in full view without attempting to move, as this one did. Having reduced our temperature to its normal level we went on, and almost immediately saw a hind's head silhouetted against the sky-line. Buckley was in front and I whispered to him to know if he could see the stag. Before he could answer the hind came walking down the hill and was followed by three more and a calf. Then came a stag, and as he appeared, Buckley said, "That's him; wait till he comes down the gully."

There was a little gully running straight down into the bush within eighty yards of us, and down

this gully I quite expected the deer to come. Instead of that the old brute who was leading switched off diagonally and trotted over the sky-line two hundred yards distant. The stag followed stern on, and the couple of hasty shots I fired left him in undisturbed possession of hinds and his head. Somewhat gloomily we retraced our steps to the hut. After breakfast, an eighteen-mile walk took us up to our new camp. Burton went on in front and about 11.30 Buckley and I, who were some distance ahead of the pack train, saw a nice stag suddenly trot out of a small hollow within a quarter of a mile from the track. He kept looking back, and following the direction of his gaze we discovered Burton and Duncan in the grotesque positions always assumed by stalkers to the eye of an onlooker, apparently endeavouring to take cover behind a blade of grass! The manœuvre, though it looked impossible to us, was successful, for after a short time the stag trotted on, joined seven or eight hinds, who had suspiciously watched the proceedings, and then lay down in the sun on the top of a small knoll.

It is a true remark in stalking, whatever may be its relation to other matters, that lookers-on see most of the game. We had front seats on this occasion, and for twenty minutes or so, were both edified and amused to watch our friends engaged on what was really a very good stalk. The ground was slightly undulating, and by dint of careful crawling they managed to get within eighty yards of the stag.

Every moment I expected an old hind, who was evidently far from easy, to spring to her feet, and with mincing gait and cocked ears give the show away to her lord and master. Perseverance won the day, and not until the two crawling figures were within shot did the assembled ladies spring to their feet, and with startled looks indicate the direction from which danger threatened. I had my glass on the stag, and saw him make a movement to spring to his feet. At the same instant a little puff of hair shot from his neck, his head fell forward, while his legs waved spasmodically for a few seconds in the air. The hinds dashed up the hill. As they passed him he made one desperate effort to rise, then fell back with a groan which we could plainly hear from our hiding-place, and so died. When the pack train caught up with us his head reposed on the quarters of a pony instead of his own neck, and turned out to be a nice little royal.

A few miles farther on I met Mr. Armytage, an Australian sportsman, who had been fortunate enough to secure a very nice fourteen-pointer and a couple of royals, one of them a really beautiful head. He afterwards, I heard, obtained a thirteen-pointer, which, together with his other heads, constituted the best bag of the season.

April 17th.—Anticipated an event which I hoped was some years distant and had "words with the cook." I asked for some hot water for my weekly shave. He turned his head away and mumbled indistinctly into an immature and grimy growth which in

the course of time might have developed into a beard. I requested him to address his remarks to me and not to the surrounding scenery. To this he replied by advising me in the imperative to go and get my water in a place where I should have been likely to find it boiling. A month's notice being happily unnecessary we dispensed with his services as cook instanter, and watched his departing back vanish down the valley in a glow of audible cheerfulness. The rest of the day I spent sketching, whilst Burton went and killed rabbits, of which there were hundreds.

April 18th.—Had a hard day's walking over rock slides and stony tops. We had a climb of five or six thousand feet before getting on our stalking ground, but the views both up the Hunter Valley towards Mount Ferguson and down towards Lake Hawea were very fine. My boots got cut about a good deal but the ice nails held well. Saw some nice young ten-pointers but no stags worth shooting. Burton, however, came in about 8.15, having killed another royal with a pretty head.

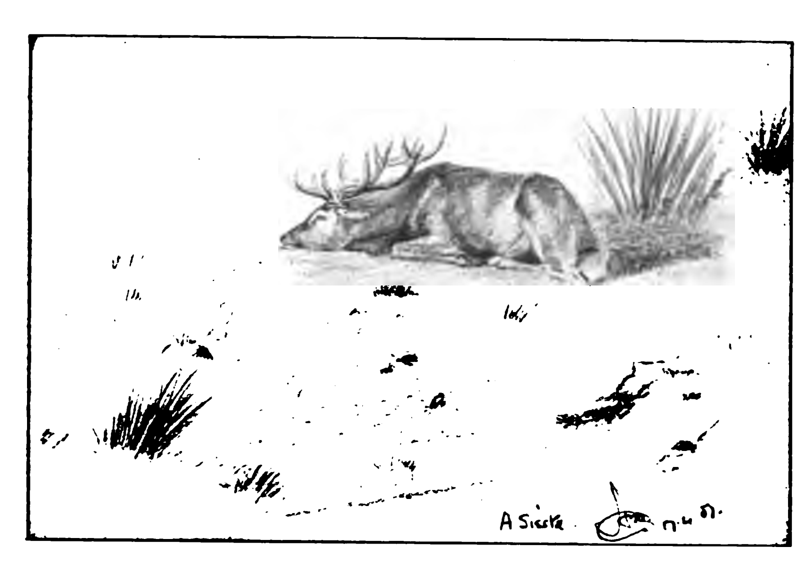
April 19th.—Was awakened at dawn by the Paradise ducks calling each other. They are very handsome birds, more like a goose in appearance than a duck. In the distance they seem quite black, with the exception of the snow-white head of the duck and some white markings on the wings common to both sexes. The breast of the female, however, is covered with shimmering bronze feathers similar to those on a cock pheasant, with some green and brown colouring

in the wings; whilst the drake has very handsome dark-green plumage, also with some colouring in the wings. I'm afraid this description would not meet with the approval of a scientific bird lover, but I never saw one of these birds very close, and then only through a glass. The female has a bright rather cheerful call, which gets deeper when a warning note is sounded, usually answered by the fuller and reassuring cry of the drake.

We left camp about 7.30 and were on the top of the hill by about 11. Passed a black rabbit on the way, a lucky omen!

The tops were covered in mist and we could do nothing at first. A ten-pointer came roaring down the gully opposite to us, and though he had a good head we decided to leave him in the hope of something better. Over the ridge we found an ugly seven-pointer accompanied by five or six hinds. About three o'clock Buckley spotted a hind right at the head of a big slide on top of the hill, and the next minute I found some more hinds and a stag. He had nice tops, but it was hard to make out his head against the grey background of rock at so great a distance. However, we decided he was good enough to stalk, and started to climb the hill. At the top we found an eight-pointer, a very nice-looking young stag with nine or ten hinds. We had to move him, but he went the right way and left our stag undisturbed. We were in full view of the latter animal for three or four hundred yards but reached a hollow without

having moved him. Just as we reached the top of the ridge, within a couple of hundred yards of the spot from which I hoped to get a shot, a wild-looking seven-pointer suddenly charged past us at full gallop, and after one startled look rushed straight into the middle of the deer we were stalking. There was only one hope, so we ran over the splintered shale as quickly as we were able in the hopes of getting a shot before they had all gone out of sight. In this we were lucky, for I saw my stag standing up against the sky-line taking a final look back before following his hinds, who had all vanished. The wild-eyed seven-pointer was watching the progress of events half way down the ridge. My first shot was a clean miss, but the second broke his foreleg. He gave a jump and went out of sight, whilst we followed as quickly as the nature of the ground permitted. It is astonishing when occasion arises how fast one can get over ground on which in the ordinary course of events unlimited time and a walking-stick would be regarded as essentials. As we reached the spot on which my stag had been standing we saw the leading hind emerge from the dip into which their headlong rush had carried them. The stag was limping along behind. I shot very badly, having to fire five or six more shots before he rolled down the hill and brought up on a big rock some hundreds of yards below us. His lower points were not by any means equal to his tops, though he was just a royal. I was very sorry at first I had shot him, for the ten-



A Siesta



My first New Zealand Stag (*see page* 109)

pointer we had passed in the morning was a far better head; subsequent events, however, placed matters in a different light. It was 4.30 by the time we had his head off and had started down the hill, so we hurried along, for the camp was some distance from the spot where we intended to strike the valley, and the going on the flat none of the best, being very swampy.

When we had only a few hundred yards to go before reaching the bottom of the hill a stag began roaring in the gully beside us. There is no good in throwing away chances, so we stopped for a moment to have a spy. A small stag was revealed pouring out his love-sick troubles to the world in general and to us in particular, but his head was small and we prepared to continue on our way. I was just shutting my glass up before returning it to its case, when some black specks scattered about a grassy slope three-quarters of a mile away caught my eye. For a moment I hesitated, thinking that they were bushes. Then one of the specks moved and I turned my glass on them. About a dozen hinds were scattered about a little basin, and in the middle of them a fine stag with a spread that in that light looked enormous. In the early morning and late evening it is a very difficult matter to judge a stag's horns correctly; they appear much bigger than they really are and I have been let in once or twice in this way. One of the worst walks I ever had in my life was after stalking a beast which I should never have troubled about had I seen him in the middle of the day. How-

ever, there was no mistaking this stag for a big one, even allowing for the deceptiveness of the light. We watched him for a bit, and two of the hinds which had got up on their hind-legs, as deer often do, and were sparring with their fore-feet. It was too late to think of going after them then, it would have been dark before we had got half-way across the gully, so we returned to camp full of hope for the morrow.

April 20th.—Buckley and I started down the valley about eight o'clock in search of our big stag. We got within sight of the spot where we had last seen him about 9.15, and sat down in the hope of seeing him come out of the bush or of hearing him roar. In this expectation we were disappointed, as up till noon we had neither seen nor heard anything of a deer. We had been visited by a regular menagerie of other animals and birds, but the one particular beast we wanted remained in rigid seclusion. First a pair of Paradise ducks came and flirted in front of us; then a couple of swamp turkeys made their appearance amid the flax and rushes, their handsome indigo plumage and red bills contrasting strongly with the green foliage among which they paraded. A seagull was busy stuffing himself within a few yards of them; three or four hawks quartered the flats about the river bed; a couple of black rabbits hopped about within a few dozen yards of us, but vanished into their holes in company with their less conspicuous relations at the advent of a lank black and white cat, who came sneaking along, seeking

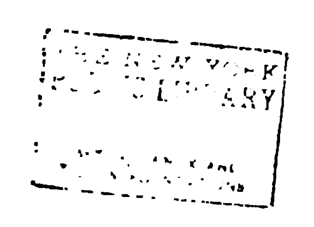
what she might devour. Whatever else might fill her hungry maw, the black rabbits were quite of a mind that their sleek little bodies should remain in their present owners' possession.

At length we gave up waiting and started up the hill. Hardly had we advanced a quarter of a mile when a hind followed by her calf appeared in full view and fed along the edge of a burn. For a long time we lay and watched them, as there was an off-chance that the stag might be lying on the edge of the bush waiting until quite certain that the coast was clear before emerging. The hinds fed on in solitude, however, and presently crawling back until the cover of a friendly hollow hid us from their view, we recommenced the ascent. The wind was all over the place. At the foot of the hill it was blowing up; at the top down. The mist was crawling up the valley, the clouds sailed steadily across it in precisely the opposite direction. Under the circumstances it was somewhat difficult to decide which way to go. The stag might be in either of two corries whose lower slopes were covered with bush, and the best thing to do seemed to get above them and endure another period of waiting, trusting to luck that he would feed out in the evening. It was three o'clock when we got to the top of the first ridge; then, as society novelists say, events moved rapidly to a conclusion!

Hardly had we seated ourselves behind a large tussock of snow-grass, than a stag roared in a gully below us. He was only a small beast, and as I

watched him another and still smaller stag walked out of a bush a few yards above him and proceeded to thrash a tree in the approved manner of his elders. He would get the stem—it was a small pitch-pine—between his horns and would then rub it vigorously up and down, varying the performance by rubbing his neck against it. I have seen stags do this latter motion elsewhere; it appears to afford them satisfaction during the rutting season.

The stag who had first roared could hear, but not see, him. He rose to his feet, cocked his head on one side, and listened, but apparently could not make up his mind as to the next event on the programme. Then he gave a tentative and somewhat subdued roar. At this, the smaller stag stopped his warlike demonstrations on the tree, cocked *his* head on one side, and also listened. They were too far to watch closely without a glass, so as my eye was getting rather tired, I took out a newspaper with some lunch in it before the following *dénouement*. When my preparations were complete and I looked again, they had both vanished. This was somewhat annoying, as I anticipated some amusement should they encounter each other; as my guide had disappeared I beguiled the time by reading the newspaper. I discovered one side to be devoted to a most enthralling serial whose title I forget. It was all about a lovely lady of the chorus, at whose feet all London was kneeling, including the hero, a noble lord. The latter's valet had just entered noiselessly, as such





A Memory

gentlemen always do, and made the dual announcement "that the devilled kidneys were ready; and that he had ventured to put out his lordship's grey lounging suit and sapphire-coloured tie," preparatory, I suppose, to a morning call on the lady, when I heard Buckley's whistle at a short distance, and looking up saw him making frantic signals to me to join him. I lost all interest in hearing the sequel of the valet's remarkable message, and, picking up my rifle, and hastily shoving the glass into its case, made my way over the tussocky grass as quickly as possible.

"Come on quick," hissed Buckley; and then, in a hoarse whisper, "he's there!"

It was needless to inquire who "he" was, so I contented myself with the laconic question "How far?" receiving the equally laconic reply "A hundred."

"A hind's seen me!" I heard over my shoulder, and mentally consigning the hind to perdition, I peered over the knoll before us. A hind, within fifty yards of the knoll, was making preparations to decamp; a little higher up the hill was a huddled group, consisting of the remainder of the harem and their offspring, all staring in our direction; all by himself, thirty yards distant from them, was a stag, the afternoon sun glinting on his tops, the whole making a picture it was worth climbing a dozen hills to have seen. There was no time to lose, for he was broadside on, offering a splendid chance. As I fired, he gave a bound, galloped forty yards down the hill, stopped, and then his legs collapsing, went rolling down a tiny

creek until a ledge far below us checked his downward career.

"He's got four on this top!" cried Buckley, as we scrambled down the hill.

"And four on the other!" I cried, "he's a thirteen-pointer." But he wasn't; he was fourteen (one of his bays snapped off close to the beam had misled me) and a beautifully symmetrical head at that. He must have been leading a fearful life in the strenuous past, for he was only skin and bones, and in addition to the broken bay had smashed the tray point above, one top badly and the other slightly.

Then it was that I blessed the little royal, for had I not stalked him and so come down on the southern instead of the northern side of the corrie wherein I had killed both him and the fourteen-pointer, I should never have seen the latter at all. That finished our stalking, for the following morning was thick with mist, and for the next five days we had nothing else and never saw the sun once.

Nearly all the deer I saw in this valley were splendid-looking animals in first-rate condition, which was rather a contrast to the Dingle. I was very much impressed with the amount of "rubbish" I saw during my fortnight's stalking there. I do not profess to have more than a hearsay acquaintance with the majority of the best forests in Scotland, though I have stalked in a good many localities during the past ten years, but never, even in small outlying forests, on anything like the same area of ground, have I seen in

a whole season's stalking so much trash as was to be met with in one day on the block I occupied. I tried to keep a careful record of all the stags I saw, and though I may have omitted a few and counted the same stag twice in some instances, as a whole my observations are fairly accurate. I went into camp on April 1st and stalked the Devil's Block for exactly a fortnight. During that time I saw sixty-one stags, ten of them being young six-pointers. Of the remaining fifty-one, thirty-three stags might be called normal, ten were pronounced malforms, one was a switch, whilst the remaining seven had but one horn apiece. Of the thirty-three stags I have called normal, thirteen were probably old stags going back, and four carried heads of seven points. This brings our total down to sixteen good stags, and of this number I consider three were shootable beasts. One—a royal—I missed; the other two, the twelve- and nine-pointers I have spoken about, we secured.

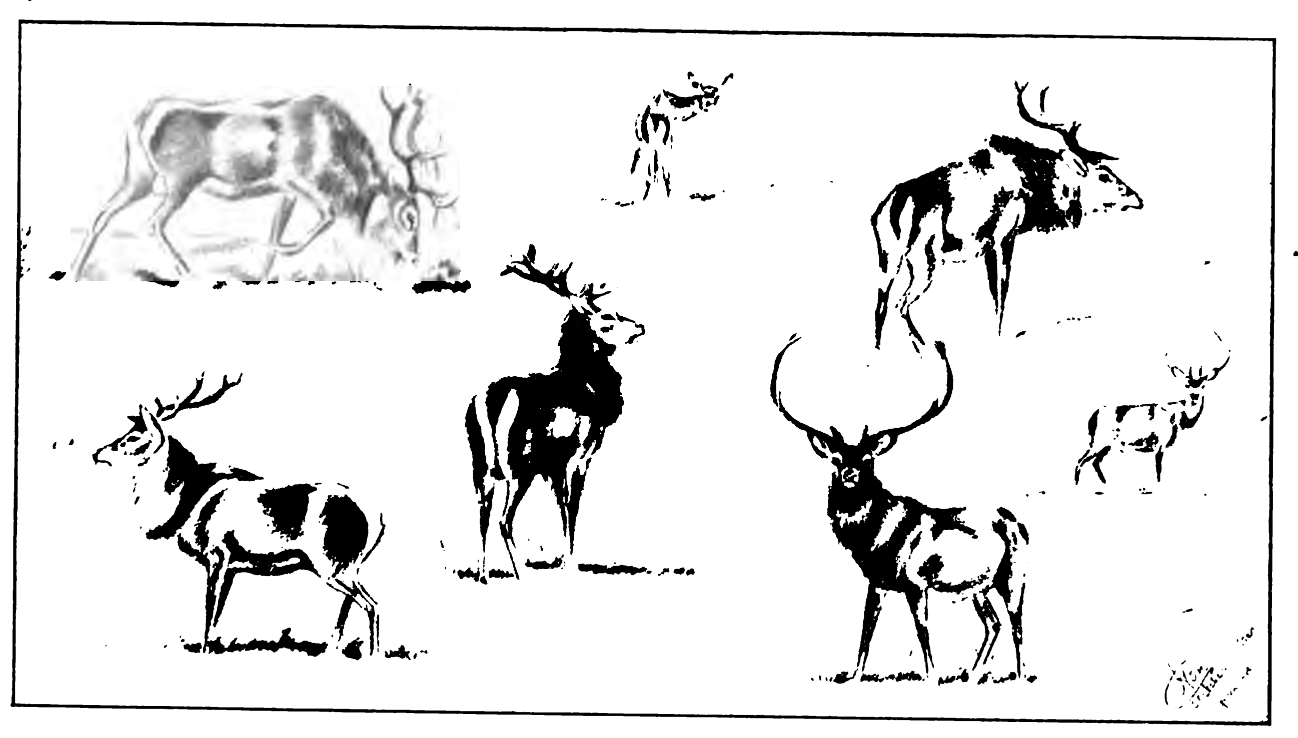
Burton, in one corrie, saw five stags having only one horn apiece, all of them with hinds varying in number from three to ten. I may here remark that during the whole of my stay in New Zealand I never saw more than a dozen hinds in the possession of one stag. Hawley also saw a large number of malforms, including one which, unsatisfied with his present status in the animal kingdom, was endeavouring to qualify as a unicorn, and another which, like a stag I saw, had a growth of horn twelve or fifteen inches in length extending down one side of its face.

Needless to say, these animals were in very poor condition.

The outlook is not a bright one. Here we have the numbers of rotten stags actually equalling, even if they do not preponderate over, the number of animals with a normal development of horn. The reasons for this, I am convinced, are, firstly—poor stock (particularly hinds); secondly, too large a number of deer for the ground; and last, but not least, lack of a proper system of management. There is no reason, at present, why the New Zealand authorities should sacrifice quality to quantity. Only four stags are allowed to be killed on each licence, and I do not suppose that the numbers of deer killed on these licences, legitimately, reaches two hundred.

A very large proportion of these malformed and one-horned stags were in possession of hinds, and from the fact that I saw a good many quite young stags, spikers, and three-year-old beasts with one horn, it might be inferred that many animals never have a chance of growing a good head. A well-known writer on this subject once remarked that it was not every stag who was born to the purple, and I agree with him. Perhaps one stag in fifty if let alone would attain to the dignity of a royal, but on the beat of which I am speaking there should be many more promising young stags than are apparent. The proportion also of hinds to stags is too great, and many of the hinds I saw were useless for breeding purposes.

In the Hunter Valley I found the deer in a much



Studies of Red Deer, New Zealand

more favourable condition. To start with, the area of ground has to provide for a much smaller stock, and I fancy that the feed is better. I stalked there for four days, and during that time saw forty stags. They included one malform, two one-horned stags (eight-pointers), four seven-pointers, and three six-pointers. This leaves thirty normal stags, of which two were royals (rather on the small side), one was a good fourteen-pointer, and there were certainly five nice ten-pointers, which would develop into really good stags in a few years under normal conditions. I have seldom seen a finer-looking lot of deer than in this district, more especially when the fact must be taken into consideration that all the ground had already been stalked over before.

I embodied the gist of these remarks on the deterioration of the deer in a letter to the Otago *Daily Times*. It aroused a heated discussion. Mr. J. H. King, one of the most experienced stalkers in the Colony, had pointed out as early as 1905 that the Otago herd was badly in need of supervision. Mrs. Smithson, another keen stalker whom I have had the pleasure of meeting since my return to England, had agitated in 1906 with no result; various other sportsmen, notably Mr. Hardcastle, had written on the same point; the only result being that the Otago Acclimatisation Society remained in its former state of sleepy inactivity. Now I have the greatest admiration for the Acclimatisation Societies of New Zealand. They have done splendid work for the Colony;

but that is no reason why they should rest on their laurels. One gentleman, replying to my letter, was kind enough to inform me that I didn't know what I was talking about; that it was impossible to tell a hind five years old from one of twenty; (this has a certain amount of truth in it, but any stalker can tell a rotten, weedy, old beast from a young hind, suitable for breeding purposes;) that all the malformed heads to which I had alluded were the result of accidents. He then drew a delightful picture of stags clambering about among the rocks of North Otago, bruising their horns against every rock and tree they encountered. If this gentleman possesses the knowledge of the habits of deer he would fain have us believe, he would know that a stag with growing horns is rather more careful of them than an undergraduate with his first meerschaum pipe. If these heads are due to falls and accidents, why is it that so few are seen in Scotland? Why, too, should malforms be common in accessible and open country, whilst the rough country at the head of the Hunter Valley is comparatively free from them? The majority of forests in Scotland are not, I admit, anything like so rough as the ground in Otago, but there are lots of places where a stag could manage a nasty accident. Yet a malformed head in the North is regarded as something of a rarity.

One paper came out in a most modest way with the following paragraph:—

"Mr. Wallace's suggestion that all old hinds should be shot out would naturally lead to the

belief that he knows little or nothing about deer, least of all about Otago deer. . . . Let us emphasise this: There is no deterioration in the deer herds of North Otago, for all over the deer country are to be seen the finest stags and hinds and the largest and best heads in the world."

The assertion which would seem naturally to follow is left to the reader's imagination!

I cannot refrain from quoting one remark made by a gentleman on the Committee of the Otago Acclimatisation Society. It is taken from a report of the proceedings which lies before me.

Mr. ——. "I am on the executive and never saw a deer in my life. I would suggest that some men with practical knowledge be associated with us."

A resolution was carried that a close season be arranged, to allow the shooting off of game with malformations and the eradication of rubbish.

There are several remedies for that state of affairs prevalent in Otago. The first thing to be done is to get rid of the rubbish. All these malforms, one-horned stags, old hinds, and other trash should be remorselessly destroyed. The Society have, I believe, taken steps in this direction, though I have no details to hand, but unless they make their decision quickly there will not be a stag fit to shoot in that particular district in three years' time. No doubt the best plan would be to pay competent stalkers so much per head for every rotten beast destroyed. This might be a somewhat difficult matter to arrange,

but certainly not an insurmountable one. I should also be inclined to allow competent stalkers—that is, those who have stalked before and know a good stag from a bad one—to kill any malforms they happen to come across. The guides should be made responsible for these extra animals killed, and unless such persons are able to distinguish a good stag from a bad they have no right to be guiding. The objection to this plan is, of course, that unreliable and unscrupulous persons would take advantage of it to kill more stags than their licence allows; but unless such men were mere butchers, who simply slaughtered for the sake of killing, such a course would do them no good, as they could only take four heads away with them, provided that the stalking regulations were in the hands of practical men. However, that is a detail.

Having got rid of all the rubbish, the best thing to do would be to close down certain blocks, for, say, a couple of years, in order to give the young healthy stock time to develop. It might conceivably be an unpopular measure at the time, but it would pay in the long run, and improve the breed of deer in those districts. The great thing, however, is to get rid of the rubbish. There is no need to create an artificial sanctuary, as the large amount of bush provides good winter shelter for the deer, and a refuge which they can always seek in time of trouble.

Fresh blood would greatly improve the stock and this also could be easily arranged. "There is no

better plan than to fence off a choice piece of sheltered ground, drain the land, and feed in a dozen or twenty wild hinds. A Warnham stag of two or three years old should then be placed in the enclosure. Each year a fresh lot of hinds should be captured for the stag, which should *never* be turned out in the forest. Such a stag can be obtained from Mr. Lucas of Warnham Court, Sussex."

I quote from an article by Mr. Millais which appeared recently in *Country Life*.

A mail has just come in from New Zealand. The following is a summary of recent events as far as the deer are concerned.

In June 1907 Mr. Hardcastle extracted a promise from the Otago Acclimatisation Society that a start should be made in the following summer to cull out the undesirable animals, both male and female, from the North Otago herd. He suggested also that stalkers should be allowed to kill malforms, and that the fee for stalking licences should be raised from £4 to £5, the extra funds thus obtained to be devoted to paying competent men for getting rid of "rubbish."

So matters rested until the monthly meeting of the Society in January. A resolution then appeared in the report of their proceedings stating that it had been decided to leave the herd alone, as culling operations would involve a close season! Instead the sole step to be taken was to request stalkers to shoot any malforms they might see!

By this Machiavellian scheme the Society pocketed an extra pound per licence and got stalkers to do their dirty work for them for nothing.

A storm of protest was raised and men were engaged to shoot the malforms. I have their diaries before me as I write. Buckley, my old guide, shot thirty-nine malforms and inferior rubbish; Conrad Hodgkinson, another practical and experienced stalker, eighteen. I append an extract from his diary.

"So far as I have seen, the deer are far too thick on all the country I went over, and I would advise a severe thinning out of hinds and weedy stags, of which latter there are a great number. On more than one occasion I saw malforms in places where it was impossible to stalk them owing to the number of deer surrounding them. I fully believe, if this country is not shot out severely, that in a few years it will be as bad as Timaru Creek (the locality where malforms are most in evidence).

"Had I been lucky with weather, my bag of malforms would have been nearer forty than twenty.

"In conclusion, I can only say that I was astonished at the alarming increase of deformed and weedy stags on this country since last I was on it some two years ago."

In Oamaru the men sent out to kill malforms did not apparently know where to look for them and only obtained five, although they admitted seeing a number which they did not get. Of course this furnished the anti-malform brigade with a splendid

excuse for attacking Mr. Hardcastle and other leaders of the forward movement.

Buckley estimated that he got one malform in four, and Hodgkinson one in three, so that my early remarks on the subject have been fully vindicated. Altogether nearly a hundred malforms were exterminated in about six weeks. "Some of the heads brought in are shocking things." I quote from a friend's letter. Buckley went out again after the stalking season was over, but the snow was so bad he had to return without accomplishing anything.

A meeting is now to be held annually at Dunedin during the winter show week, of practical and experienced stalkers, so it really seems that matters are improving.

Whatever may be the cause of the numbers of malforms to be found in Otago, there can be no room for doubt as to the remedy, and I am glad to find that the opinion which I expressed in the New Zealand papers is backed by so well-known an authority as Mr. Allan Gordon Cameron. I read a recent article by him in the *Weekly Press* with very great interest.

The New Zealand authorities have it in their own hands to decide whether they will make the boast which I have quoted from one of the colonial papers true, or whether they will let the condition of the herd go from bad to worse. Time will show what their choice has been.

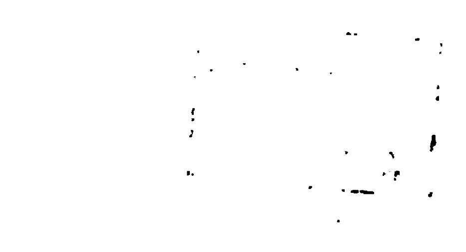
CHAPTER VIII

A JAPANESE MEDLEY

"JAPAN," remarked an American friend on my last night in Yokohama, "is a vurry hypnotic place!" No one but an American could have made the remark, and only of Japan could it have been made. I thoroughly realised its truth after my six weeks' stay.

Some gimlet-eyed persons expatiate at length on the iniquities of the Japanese. They tell me that I am wrong; that my devotion is misplaced; in fact, that I am hypnotised. Well, perhaps they are right; but for myself I am glad that my eyes were blinded that I did not see, and that the sight of the cherry or the lotus carries me back with feelings unmarred across dividing continents and seas.

I want to write of the temples set about with sturdy pines and funereal cryptomerias; of the great bronze bell which, across the green valley, numbers the hours to the listening hills; of the golden shrines of Nikko; of the heroes of old and their epic wars; of little Saku San and others; and of Kyoto where I left what is left of my heart; but I can do none of these things. Inspired pens have dealt worthily with all such matters; whilst of the writing of trash



Sacred Deer at Nara

there is no end. So I leave them with a sigh, for I love them.

Yet come with me to Nara, the city of unforgotten dreams, to the heart of old Japan, where the deer wander at will about the temple courts and gaze at the wandering pilgrim from among hallowed groves. Beautiful as it is, even in the autumn when no flowers deck its sacred walks, what it must be in April when the lovely wistaria hangs pendant above its plashing fountains I can faintly conceive. An infinite peace haunts its solitudes, and the deer who dwell among them must surely be the envied of their kind the whole world over. Keen-eyed stalkers, with small-bore rifles and spy-glasses, never send them flying among the trees, with backward glances at the monarch of the herd lying limp and bleeding in some sunlit glade; and they accept, as of their right, from laughing maidens specially fashioned cakes, the while they nuzzle soft damp noses about the sleeves and hands of those who so daintily supply their needs; for are they not sacred animals, the Sons of the Gods? Only on rare occasions do they have cause for any alarm. It is of one of these occasions that I write.

For three days previously the stags had been kept continually on the move, until at length all the finest animals had been driven into an enclosure walled with stone palisades some six feet high. The park itself was full of people. As our rickshaws bowled beneath the great scarlet *torii*, flanked by stone lanterns, which arched the avenue, we could see

quaintly-clad groups converging on all sides. Men in every variety of dress, their appearance usually ruined by some ghastly European headgear, stood aside to let us pass. Their dainty little wives clutched desperately, with the flash of a red underskirt, at adventurous tonsured mites toddling about the road. Babies of three or four, purple-faced infants with wildly-rolling eyes strapped to their backs, played among the grasses. A row of school-girls, picturesque in their old-fashioned purple and maroon riding skirts, were drawn up beside the path. Dainty *musumes* (I really must apologise, but I believe every article on Japan should properly contain this word and I don't want to spoil the record!) with elaborate coiffures looked up, caught an appreciative twinkle, slowly dawned into smiles and giggles, then voluble talk. Old ladies with blackened teeth, shaved eyebrows and, of course, the inevitable baby, sat beside their booths vending pomegranates, apples, persimmons, dried seaweed (this for chewing), small metal deer, horns, and a host of other curious articles. Ropes, festooned with flags, hung above the grey stone lanterns standing in mute mossgrown rows, and by contrast threw the dark shadows of the cryptomerias into yet deeper shade. Up the long avenue, past the thousand-year-old temple of Kasuga they went, this kaleidoscopic procession, happy, smiling, and talking, attracting us a thousand times more than we did them despite their friendly glances. The babbling murmur of their clogs made a soft undernote which still haunts me.



The Deer Enter the Enclosure



Before the First Drive

So we came presently to the spot where the sacred ceremony of cutting the deer's horns was to take place, and to the stone palisade.

The origin of the rite I could not discover; it was old every one agreed, but precisely how old no one seemed to know, perhaps the beginning of the seventeenth century. The crowd became thicker and a network of bamboo scaffolding showed through the trees. Suddenly in our midst appeared a debased and wild-eyed stag. Ichabod! his glory had departed, for from his skull where branching antlers should have lent him pride were naught but two white shining discs surmounting the burr. The crowd laughed, and, feeling his shame yet greater, he gave a leap and disappeared among the trees. Then through a gate, where smiling officials in badly-made frock-coats took tickets, and up a slippery bamboo ladder to a narrow platform some ten feet above the ground. It formed one side of an enclosure, three hundred feet long by forty wide, or thereabouts. At either end was a matting-covered opening; above each a raised daïs. One was occupied by two Shinto priests in full canonicals; the other was empty.

In the arena were a score or so of men, clad in blue with yellow cloths about their heads. Conventionalised antlers, worked in white, adorned their coats, and in their hands were rope nets strung on frames of bamboo. With these they captured the deer, entangling the beasts' horns in the nets as they rushed past.

They stood promiscuously about in no particular formation, whilst a very old gentleman, the exact duplicate of Sir Walter Gilbey minus a top hat, directed operations with a walking-stick. The head forester, or such I took him to be, attired in green, stood opposite a side entrance holding a wicker tray of food. Parallel to this bamboo enclosure, on the other side of the road, was the stone draw I have already mentioned. Over the top of the palisades I could see a moving mass of antlers and mouse-coloured bodies. Three weeks previously their coats had all been spotted, but now by their grey colouring and the shaggy necks of the stags it was easy to see that autumn was near. The gentleman in the green coat waggled his tray enticingly; Sir Walter Gilbey ceased to waggle his stick; the cervadors, or whatever they ought to be called, flattened themselves along the sides of the arena; there was an expectant hush, then with a spring and a bound a fine stag leaped through the opening. For a second he stood with his head up and his nose in the air. Secretly and wickedly I longed for a rifle. "What on earth," he seemed to be saying, "is all the fuss about?" Then with a rush and a flurry came a dozen more stags, bursting through behind him; the traitor in the green coat vanished; the door was shut, and they were prisoners.

Three of the stags had fine heads; the remainder ranged from old beasts going back to youngsters of four or five. One very light fawn-coloured animal



A Capture



Sawing off the Horns

was expelled; the captives, led by the first stag, trotted up to the end of the enclosure and had a look at the high priest. Evidently the inspection did not please them, for the next second they all swung to the right-about and came tearing down below us. Perhaps being sacred deer there was an occult chord of sympathy between them and the high priest which enabled the latter to direct their movements by some strange and hypnotic suggestion; anyway they turned and the fun began.

The big stags were, of course, last; they always are, as many a stalker knows to his sorrow. There was a confused scuffle, one or two record jumps, a frantic brandishing of nets, and the deer were through. One small stag was nearly caught. He broke away with a net entangling his horns and bits of broken bamboo tying him up behind. The ensuing exhibition of buck jumps was remarkable.

Sir Walter Gilbey pranced up and down brandishing his stick and counting the casualties. None being apparent, he signalled to the high priest, who switched on the sacred power which brought the deer back with a rush. This time the luck was better. Two of the blue-clad coolies fell together upon one animal and after a short but heated struggle bore him to the ground, amidst enthusiastic applause, almost at our feet.

I really believe that this was courteously arranged so that we might have a good view of the ceremony. Sir Walter rushed up, attended by an aged man armed

with a meat saw. They then howled in unison. Two satellites arrived, one with a pillow, the other carrying a large strip of matting. This was laid down and on it the struggling stag was placed, the pillow beneath his head. His ear was drawn down over his eyes; then nine men sat on him and tucked him up all nice and comfy. I bethought me that I would like to photograph so unique a view. But how could I immortalise a struggling deer, in a bad light with no sun? Hypnotic influence was in the air. One of the smiling attendants was at my side as if by magic. He waved his hand and marconi-grammed to Sir Walter. Sir Walter waved his stick; more myrmidons rushed up and fell upon the struggling victim; I'm not sure the high priest himself didn't lend some assistance, though as far as I could see, he never moved, and—I got my photograph. It seemed a marvel that the deer did not break their slender legs. The poor brutes were very fat and rapidly got used up. They stood about with heaving necks and lolling tongues, yet none were injured, with the exception of a few cuts and scratches, in the majority of cases inflicted by their own kind.

Whilst a big stag was having his horns cut off, an operator noticed a gash in his flank. Picking up some earth, he rubbed it vigorously on the wound, a remedy which I have heard mentioned before as being efficacious. In one charge a man got knocked over by the antlers of a stag and lay groaning.

This was the only casualty all day, though about thirty beasts were dehorned. His friends, who had, I fancy, been indulging in the cup that cheers, rushed up, got him on his feet, ascertained that he had fears of a broken rib, and then shook him violently up and down to prove how ill-founded were his suspicions. The treatment seemed too drastic to prove efficacious, and the patient, under the directions of the ubiquitous Sir Walter, was removed groaning.

I examined a good many of the horns after they had been sawn off, and there was no trace of blood on any. They were ground to powder subsequently and used as medicine for wounds.

The deer frequently fought with each other, and the dehorned beasts before they could escape from the enclosure had a very poor time. Japanese deer, like the Japanese themselves, are extraordinarily powerful for their size. They only stand about 32 inches at the shoulder, yet in but few cases when captured did they fail to pull their captor off his feet. One very powerful stag took five men to throw him, and even then he gave them a very poor time.

The unequal struggle over, he made his inglorious exit, and we adjourned to a sweet little tea-house by a waterfall where dear little girls gave us lunch. After lunch the frivolous member of the party (and it wasn't me!) played cat's cradle with the sweetest of the sweet little girls and cemented the Anglo-Japanese alliance. He evidently thought it was in a bad way, for, between giggles, a lot of cement was applied. I

looked on and sadly ruminated over the unfair advantages which a gift of tongues confers on the owner, and wished that I was such an one, or that the Tower of Babel had never been built.

Then we returned to the deer. Most of them had already departed, hornless and abashed, but there were still the three big ones to vanquish and one or two young beasts. The big stag came crashing and rattling below us with three nets entangled in his horns. Evading many rather wild grabs, for *saké* had been flowing freely, he got up in a corner and thrashed his head savagely from side to side. At length by sheer fury he got rid of his encumbrances and came charging back bleeding freely at the mouth. Then a diversion occurred. A very drunk man dropped heavily into the arena, looked about him in a dazed kind of way for some moments, and proceeded to gird up his loins for action. His costume when completed to his own satisfaction consisted of a brown and much bedraggled kimono tied in a lump round his waist, blue shorts and stockings, elastic-sided boots, and a vest. A man near him, a very powerful fellow, though the toper himself was no child, had sneaked up behind a panic-stricken stag, grabbed his horns and unaided thrown him. The gentleman in the bedraggled kimono evidently considered this a feat which he might worthily endeavour to emulate. The big stag was standing alone in one corner, and he the follower of Bacchus alone considered worthy of his strength. He pro-

ceeded carefully to skirt the walls of the arena, with the most ludicrously determined expression on his face. As the stag's hind-quarters were the first portion of the beast's anatomy which his peregrinations brought him in contact with, he laid hold. The next instant, like Huntley Wright's victim, he was "lying among the fragments, wondering what hit him," whilst the stag was snorting defiance thirty yards away. Pained and grieved was the gentleman's expression as he rose to his feet and wandered idly whither his uncontrolled feet would lead him, amid the delighted yells of the onlookers. Presently his zigzag course led him into the whereabouts of a young stag, a five-pointer. Him he gripped, and though turning somersaults and weird gymnastic tumblings in all directions, hung on like grim death until assistance arrived. The executioner came trotting up with his saw. The bearers of the mat and pillow joined him, but not Sir Walter, who had retired in disgust. Whilst these operations were in progress the big stag came under the influence of the high priest's eye, or some equally potent motive power, and charged down upon the group at full speed. The five-pointer and four men lay directly in his path, but with one single splendid jump he cleared the lot.

That sealed his doom. A combined effort penned him in a corner from which there could be only one exit, and soon he rushed forth hornless and conquered to join an unsympathetic family. I witnessed

the reunion, which was brutal, to say the least of it. His wife merely sniffed, then turned her head. His son gazed in childish and unfeigned wonder at the extraordinary transformation which had taken place in the appearance of his usually proud and unbending parent, and then bolted.

I was not allowed to buy the horns. It would have derogated from the dignity of the temple. But I gave an offering to the shrine, and the high priest very kindly presented them to me as a souvenir!

And then it was all over and we had to go. Past the grey and ghostly lanterns, the scarlet and grey *torii*, the friendly shade of immemorial cryptomerias, and the laughing, chattering throng of people, to Kyoto, and so in due time to the lovely harbour of Nagasaki and the ship which lay there.

> "Very sadly did we leave it, but our hearts we gave in pledge,
> To the pine above the city, to the blossom in the hedge."

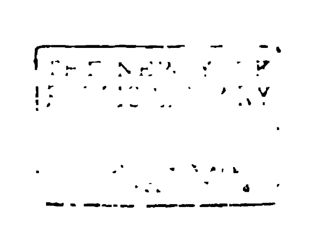
Some day I am going back to find mine; until then —"*Sayonara.*"



THE PRESIDING PRIESTS (*see page* 139)



SAYONARA !



CHAPTER IX

SMALL GAME IN INDIA

It takes the casual sportsman travelling in India but a short time to discover that so far as he is concerned big game shooting is a snare and a delusion. He may perhaps wend his way to Kashmir at the proper season and track Adamzad to his lair, but the buffalo, rhinoceros, and tiger are another matter. His best chance of sport lies in his being the particular pal of some Government official; then he may do well. If he be a Viceroy, Lieutenant-Governor, or other big-wig, he rejoices in high places at the shoots of some Rajah; but Viceroys, Lieutenant-Governors and *hoc genus omne* scarcely come under the heading of travelling sportsmen. Unless then a traveller—or, as others call him, a globe-trotting tourist—has friends at court, or knows the ropes, he will get little beyond blackbuck, chinkara, and perhaps a "mugger." He can, however, get a good deal of fun out of small game shooting of this kind, even though the various brigands who lurk about the hotels at Delhi, Agra, and elsewhere thinly disguised under the *nom de guerre* of "Shikari" make a good thing out of him.

We arrived in Bombay on 7th November, after a

three days' train journey from Tuticorin, about which the less said the better, and a few days later left for Rajputana. Udaipur was our first stop. In one of the best books on travel ever written, Sir Frederick Treves has given a very vivid description of this wonderful place. It lies in the centre of a plain, circled about by watchful hills. On a ridge above the town, unchanged amid the changes of a changing world rises a great white palace, the crystallised embodiment of an Eastern dream. The cool green waters of a lake, on whose bosom float little islands supporting carved and fretted edifices of marble, reflect its towering walls and domes, and the shady orange groves which surround them. Out, near the farther shore, rises a small tower. Years ago, the legend runs, a troupe of dancers and acrobats famed for their feats upon the tight-rope came to Udaipur. One young girl in particular was renowned for her coolness and daring. Could she but walk across the lake on a rope stretched from the palace walls, the reigning Maharana swore to give her all she desired, even to the half of his kingdom.

The day came and she started on her perilous journey. When two-thirds of the distance were safely accomplished, a courtier, fearing lest she should succeed, drew his sword and severed the rope. So she perished in the waters beneath, and the tower marks where she fell.

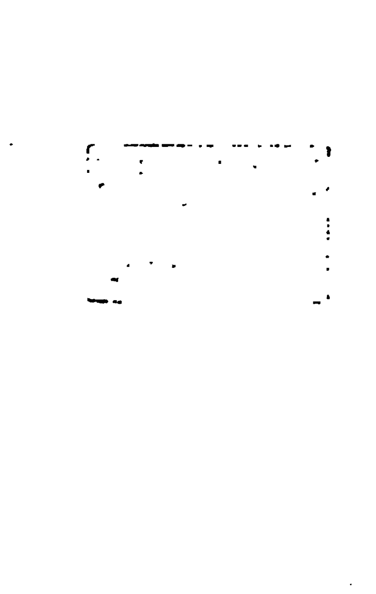
It is the proud boast of the rulers of Meywar that never has a princess of their line gone to swell



UDAIPUR FROM THE LAKE



FEEDING WILD SWINE AT UDAIPUR



the harems of the Mohammedan conquerors. One princess there was, famed for her loveliness, on whose account many a warrior attacked the state. Tired of the long conflict, the reigning Maharana ordered one of his nobles to slay his daughter that peace might come to the land. The noble refusing to obey, cursed him for a coward and as one unfit to have the blood of Rajput princes in his veins, saying that henceforth no direct son of his, nor his descendants, should sit upon the throne of Meywar. The prophecy has been fulfilled. Then the Maharana sent soldiers to kill the princess, but, vanquished by her beauty, they returned. Next he tried poison, but an overdose saved her life. Then, in despair, to give rest to the land she loved, the maiden took her own life, but the curse remained!

Opposite the palace, just on the edge of the jungle, from amid the tree-tops a small building peers, at one end of which lies a yard surrounded by high walls. Here animal fights take place. Its occupant on our visit was a huge wild boar. A few days previously a panther had been pitted against him. The walls were twenty-five feet high, but so terrified was the panther, that in one desperate effort to escape he actually touched the edge of the coping with his forepaws. He was soon killed.

A noise like rain pattering upon a roof attracted our attention, and on the dusty open space at the edge of the jungle we saw at least two hundred wild swine. They were regularly fed every evening, and even

during a famine when human beings were starving the practice was not discontinued. Great, stark, fierce-looking brutes they were, too, with stiff bristly backs and splendid tushes. Occasionally some more than usually daring panther would creep in from the jungle and kill a young one, though this was of rare occurrence. In the surrounding trees were numbers of wild peacocks and pigeons waiting to pick up anything that came their way.

The shooting was all very carefully preserved, but Captain Chenevix Trench, the acting Resident, very kindly said that he would arrange for us to have a try for chinkara, or ravine deer, a little gazelle standing about twenty-four inches at the shoulder. Accordingly we started off one morning at daybreak in a bullock tonga.

We had been provided with a letter of introduction to Raj Singh, a Rao or noble who lived in an old mediæval Rajput castle. Thither we went. Bullocks with curved and painted horns, their sleek sides bedaubed with patches of colour, plodded patiently through the dust and gazed with sleepy-eyed envy at the grey donkeys and water-buffaloes who browsed contentedly at the roadside. Picturesque strings of women, nose-ringed, their arms, ankles, and toes loaded with bracelets of quaint design, heavy anklets of brass, and silver ornaments passed to and fro. Their dull red garments floated about their graceful forms, one corner being furtively drawn about their usually ugly features at our approach.

Fine old Rajput warriors with carefully brushed whiskers and moustaches strode past, sword or rifle in hand. Children with black-rimmed eyes gazed stolidly from astride their mothers' hips, or squealed shrill salutes from the shadow of some carved gateway.

It took us a good half-hour to reach the castle. We entered through an arched door above which hung a metal gong struck by a wooden beam. It sounded musically as we passed beneath. Round a small fire were squatting a group of fiercely bearded retainers, picturesque in gaily coloured turbans, and armed with long curved swords. They rose and salaamed. We presented our letter.

After a short wait a man beckoned to us. Through a bewildering maze of white courts we followed, past square bathing pools and fountains, orange groves and flowering shrubs. Coming to the pierced and crenellated outer wall, on which were perched vultures and the grey-headed Indian crow, we climbed a rickety iron stair and entered a small poorly furnished cupboard. Off this lay another room containing a few cheap European articles of furniture and beyond yet another. In the centre of the latter was a huge eiderdown quilt, from which came muffled groans. No sign of Raj Singh, and we hung back. Three Rajputs were in the first room and these motioned us forward. In we went, and from one corner of the quilt a great unwinking eye suddenly held us. The groans continued with the accurately-timed intervals of a salute. A long lean arm shot out

from the quilt and waved languidly to a couple of chairs.

"Sit down," said a voice in English. "Ouch! Ouch! I have a very bad pain for three days!"

The arm disappeared and the centre of the quilt heaved. We murmured appropriate condolences.

It appeared from what I subsequently heard that most of the Rajputs got badly crocked at the beginning of the cold weather.

"Ouch! Ouch!" continued the groans. "I will send my shikari with you!" Then, as Raj Singh's English was not his strong point and our Rajput nil, we cleared.

Our guide led us all over the gardens, until in an angle of the wall another and most imposing-looking gentleman suddenly made his appearance and thrust a hand upon each of us. He was very courtly. Then he began a flow of remarks in fluent Hindustani.

We were quite at a loss until a happy thought suddenly struck Robert. He tapped his cartridges. The courtly gentleman shook his head. Then I had a shot.

"Chinkara!" said I.

The surrounding entourage grinned affably and carried on a lengthy conversation among themselves. Robert had another brain-wave.

"Tonga!" he exclaimed. We wanted to get after chinkara, not stop talking a language we could not understand.



Spying for Chinkara



A Morning with Blackbuck



Back we went, rather despondently it must be confessed, for it seemed we should get no assistance. However, just as we were about to start, an old gentleman jumped up behind with the single explanation—

"Shikari!"

He led us through a little village, and after witnessing the antics of a refractory camel, signed to us to get out at a little wayside mosque. We had a longish walk over very rough ground, past cactus hedges on which were countless doves, strips of cultivated land where peacocks strutted uttering their peculiar call, whilst a troop of grey-faced monkeys with long curving tails played their senseless games.

There was nothing very distinctive in the day's sport. The chinkara were uncommonly wild and uncommonly difficult to hit. However, we annexed one after a long, tiring stalk, and returned more or less satisfied.

Our next chance came at Jeypore. Through the kindness of H.H. the Maharajah we were given permission to shoot one blackbuck apiece on his private preserve.

Jeypore has well been called "a surprising city," for it is like no other place which you will see in India, a town of pink and white dolls' houses intersected by wide streets. Its founder, Jey Sing, must have been a surprising man, with a mania for astronomical research. But Jeypore itself and the great white and yellow palace of Amber, staring desolately forth above forgotten ruins, lay behind

us as we set out that morning in the chill of the early dawn. With us came a tall muffled figure, whom we subsequently knew as Pertap Singh, of the same clan as his famous namesake. A drive of three miles past droves of posing, self-conscious, camels from the distant Ajmere market; bullock carts; ekkas, those expansive vehicles which seem capable of holding an unlimited number of passengers provided only that they are indigenous; swaggering men with swords, and cringing beggars in rags, brought us to the spot at which the bullock tongas were waiting. The whole thing savoured more of a deer drive given by a millionaire than the solitary stalk which we had anticipated. There were bullock drivers and shikaris, and, when once we had started, horsemen on splendid mounts who came to mark any wounded beasts, straight, save for their smart, well-fitting khaki, from the pages of the "Arabian Nights." Through some misunderstanding, for Burton was to have first shot, I found myself in the leading tonga with Pertap Singh. The tall *pani* grass shut us in on every hand, and five yards from the road we might have been miles from any highway. Great clumps of it shot into the air, twelve or fifteen feet high, their feathery tops flushing in the crimson dawn as they swayed and bowed to the coming of the sun. Then from behind the nearest bunch came a buck. With the tail of my eye I could see Burton frantically struggling with a refractory rifle cap. Whilst he struggled the buck took a few steps forward; after

him a string of antelope came leaping and bounding down the dry bed of a nullah. There were at least four good heads, one certainly, even allowing for the fact that it graced its original owner and not the walls of a smoking-room, twenty-six inches. The ground seemed covered with them, flashing in and out behind the tall, swaying grasses on which adventurous tits swung and climbed. Then the nullah hid them, and by the time Burton reached its edge they were giving a very poor chance. He had a snap but it went down to the debit side of the ledger, which was real bad luck, and our misunderstanding lost him a nice head.

It was quite light now, and when I saw Pertap Singh and the "Arabian Nights" gentlemen, I must confess that I felt a fearful tramp, clad in an old khaki shooting suit and a flannel shirt! Pertap Singh himself was a very handsome man, a typical Rajput noble. I could quite imagine him *à la* Clarence Blakiston declaiming to an admiring and sympathetic gallery, "Now is the time to show that while an Indian prince I am also an English gentleman! Take the girl!" (Terrific applause, sympathetic sniffs, and cries of "Isn't he a darling!")

Making quite sure of no further misunderstandings, we proceeded. The bucks were all out of sight, and though another herd soon showed up in the distance they were already alarmed and unapproachable.

Sunrise over the plain of nodding grass was a beautiful sight. Hawks with fluttering wings hung

poised here and there in quest of their morning's meal, quartering the ground as regularly and quietly as any good setter. A thatched watch-tower marked a little patch of cultivation. In the branches of an overhanging tree chattered and grimaced a troop of grey-whiskered monkeys. We left them talking excitedly the one to the other in the strange unintelligible language of the *bandar-log*, while kites wheeled overhead and the little tits swayed and bobbed across the clearings.

Through a patch of young sugar-cane I saw a buck's head. An easy stalk gave me an easy shot. He was an old beast with rough horns, very much knocked about.

Then Robert got up in the front tonga, the buck was tucked away underneath and we moved out into the plain once more. The high grass gave way to dusty hummocks of earth and, in the distance, belts of cultivation. The tongas swung and creaked on. The patient bullocks with their green-painted horns plodded forward, placidly contented. On a sudden the leading pair stopped. Through the grass, away in the distance, I saw spiral horns rising long and sharp against the sky, the clean-cut black-and-white body underneath.

Hardly had the tonga come to a standstill when Robert was off. He had not gone far when he stopped, beckoning to Burton. Not till then did another buck, feeding alone at right angles to the road, become apparent. He had seen us but was not

much alarmed and moved slowly away. Seeing that his signalling had been understood, Robert was off again after his buck, leaving Burton in pursuit of the other.

I watched him crawling forward, though it was clear from his spasmodic jerks that he was not getting much fun out of his position. His subsequent "plucking" rendered his contortions explicable. The buck was out of sight, but just where the *pani* grass began I saw some does watching. Presently they moved out of sight and simultaneously the stalker stood and fired.

Robert and his quarry were hidden by a rise in the ground, but almost as the shot rang out the former showed again, standing like a rock with his rifle up. It seemed ages till the motionless figure framed in the round disc gave a little shudder and the crack reached me. The bullet told loudly. Robert rushed forward, stood again, there was another crack and he waved his arm wildly. The shikari grunted "Good, Sahib! Good, Sahib!" the only English he knew, as he pounded along, and there lay a beautiful buck dead among the grasses. It was a splendid shot, for the antelope was fully a hundred and seventy yards off at the first shot, and to hit an animal the size of a blackbuck "off the shoulder" at this distance requires no little skill. His horns measured twenty-four inches, a very good length nowadays.

Burton arrived at last very much out of breath

and very angry, for his luck had not changed, and he had had a poor chance again. However, one of the shikaris came up to Pertap Singh and announced that he had seen more antelope close by, and on we went.

After some little delay we found the herd of some fifty antelope feeding about a small rise. They looked very smart and dapper in the early light.

Burton gave chase, but they saw him coming and moved off down a nullah. He always seemed to strike them in this sort of ground. While they were yet a great way off, he had a shot at an extraordinarily light-coloured beast with a very wide spread, but they still went on. Robert and I sat in our tonga and had to watch the whole herd jumping and springing past within a hundred and fifty yards. There they were, offering a most sporting shot, and we had to watch them out of sight without getting our rifles out of their covers. Still we couldn't complain, for we were very lucky to have got into this splendid preserve at all. The last comer had been a Frenchman, who had got nothing. This news did not much surprise us, as we had seen something of the gentleman in question at another place. Attired in a white duck suit and snowy helmet, we had watched him sally forth in quest of partridges. Failing in this, he had devoted the morning to slaughtering doves and pigeons, which, by the way, were sacred and as tame as barn-door

fowls, details which he did not condescend to notice.

Eminently satisfied with his morning's work, he had spent the afternoon assiduously browning what he was pleased to term a "covey of crows." He informed us with great pride that he had hit at least five with one shot, though none were actually dead. A little revolver practice elicited the fact that the small pocket-pistol he carried was intended to put the finishing touches to a wounded tiger, an animal which, though he naïvely admitted never having fired a rifle, he intended to pursue on foot whenever an opportunity should present itself.

I met him subsequently at a fancy dress ball. Trusting to a sense of humour, he had tied a piece of rope round his neck and represented "The Lost Chord." Had it not been for the lady escorting him he would have been even more lost. Her costume was intended to give our benighted twentieth century a correct idea of Juliet in her prime. She had intended coming as the "Queen of Sheba," but the family jewels had not turned up! We separated after she had given me the parting piece of information that she had been married at sixteen, "we being a young marrying family," and that she loathed her husband. I saw the gentleman later and no longer wondered. He was attired as a Zulu; a rôle he fitted to perfection.

That was the last I saw of the little French-

man. Whether he escaped the lady and the tiger I never heard, but it looked unlikely.

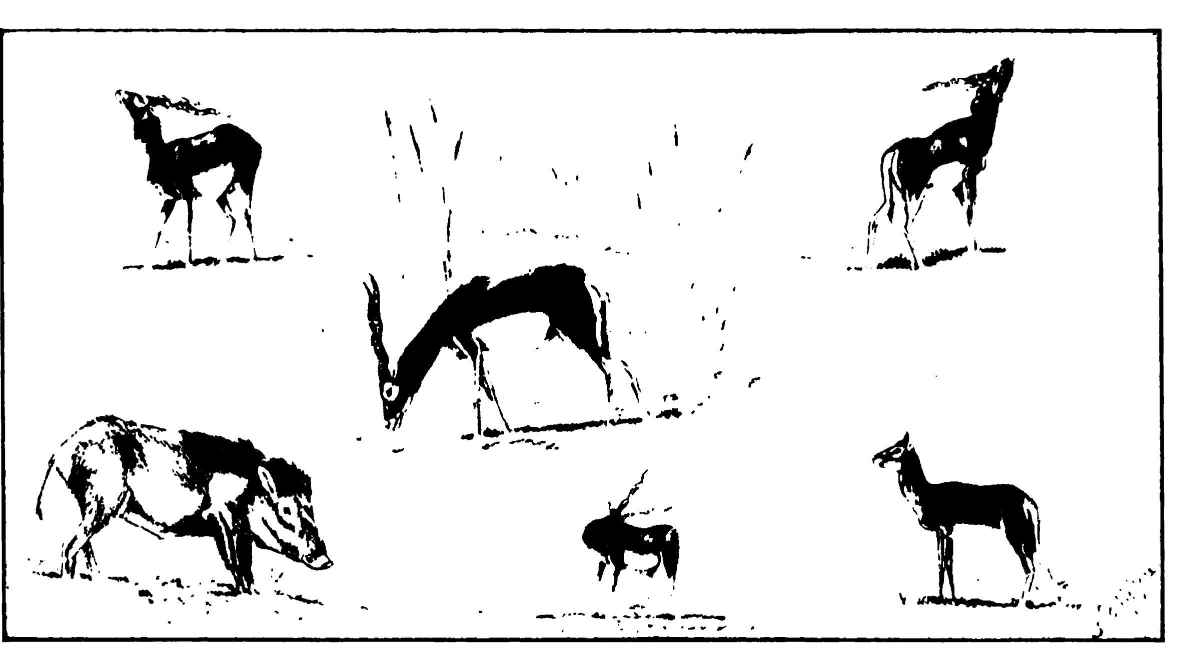
However, to return to the subject of blackbuck! On being alarmed they make a series of short springs, and when fairly under weigh get in some astonishing leaps.

I shot the leading buck in a large herd near Delhi, and the doe following jumped straight up into the air to a height of nine or ten feet, and came down almost on top of him.

They carry their heads low when going hard, the curious marking of the neck giving them a somewhat contorted appearance. My observations were limited and I could never make out whether the bucks always led or the does, when a herd was in flight. They are hard fighters and endeavour when so engaged to get their horns locked. At such times it is not difficult to get up close to them.

In spite of the hurried exit of the herd, Burton was dimly to be descried indulging in some wonderful contortions. He seemed to be crawling on pins and needles. As we watched he came to a sudden resolution, squirmed, bravely sat down and almost immediately fired. I stood up on the tonga and a buck came tearing into view. He was some way off, but a great red patch showed clearly on his side, and before going fifty yards he crashed down in a cloud of dust. He had a very nice head, but not so good as Robert's.

Then the escort formed up, and I took a photo-



Studies of Blackbuck and Pig

graph before starting on the return journey. It was uneventful save for a dozen or so wild pig, reserved, alas! for others who crossed the road within ten yards of the tonga.

An evil old mugger with a wrinkled smile and an insatiable appetite completed my bag in India. He dwelt on the banks of the holy Jumna, within sight of the smooth white dome beneath which the second of the Mogul emperors lived, and where his wretched descendant sought that sanctuary which he did not find. Perhaps, when he was yet so young that the buffalo calves could come down to the river's brink in the evening without fear of his cruel jaws, he saw white bodies come floating down the sacred stream, clad in stained red tunics which the dirty water did nothing to cleanse: but now he was very old, with a wickedness increasing in proportion to his years, so we resolved to slay him.

It was a long dusty drive out from Delhi; past the quiet grave in which John Nicholson sleeps his long sleep, still facing the rose-red walls of the city which he died to save, and so through the Kashmir Gate, the most famous of all the gates of India. It is easy, as one passes its low battered portals, to imagine that hot awful day fifty years ago, and the little group with puckered eyes who stood in its shadow, looking, always looking for the cloud of dust no bigger than a man's hand which never stirred to gladden their sight upon the white riband of road

across the river. Now, though scarred and broken, the gate still stands, much as it stood then, facing up the white, baked highway to the cool green of the trees which hide the Ridge.

The narrow red iron bridge across the river pulsed with slow Eastern life; on one side a flock of sheep, on the other a string of bullock-carts overtopped by supercilious, mincing camels. With all were white muffled figures relieved here and there by the dull gleam of a red-robed woman, splendidly erect, tinkling with metal anklets and rings. In the shrunken stream below a herd of buffaloes swam solemnly, and one no longer wondered at their stiff necks and ungainly figures. The beautiful blue Indian jay, beloved of the globe-trotter, flashed up into dusty mimosa trees and vied with the kingfishers in the glory of its plumage. *Minas* strutted industriously about the bare patched earth, intent on nothing in particular. In the distance a pair of grey cranes performed absurd and stilted gymnastics, entirely for their own edification, with much solemn flapping of wings. An occasional tiny bee-sucker flickered past like a living emerald. It was all very strange, but a strangeness to which, alas! we had become accustomed, and it was not until excited howls of "black-er-buck!" from the attendant robbers aroused us, that Robert betrayed any traces of excitement.

The pretty little antelope were feeding about half a mile from the road in the middle of a flat sun-scorched plain, a couple of small knolls near by alone

breaking the monotony of its expanse. In the distance a mud village or two shyly obtruded from a clump of trees. The glass showed a buck, so I made my way to the knolls with a lingering hope that the usually unerring Robert would this time miscalculate the distance. A few does were feeding within forty yards of my coign of vantage, absorbed, by the time I reached them, in the stalkers' manœuvres. For a few moments they watched; then a couple of shots in quick succession sent them scudding across the plain to join the masterless herd. The third robber, with the perverted instinct of his class, had carefully concealed himself in the exact line which the buck was bound to take. It was only the latter's body which saved him. However, he turned up smiling, and seemed to think that he had done quite a lot towards the success of the stalk.

The buck round Delhi have very nice thick horns, and, unless my memory fails me, the record head came from that district. Farther west their girth decreases. Albinos are occasionally met with. There is one with a nice head in the Lahore Zoological Gardens at the present time.

Slinging our beast on a staff we made for the garry, passing a well on the way, picturesque, in spite of its sun-baked surroundings, with the usual pair of patient bullocks plunging periodically down their steep incline into the pit which waited for them. A mile or so farther on we saw another solitary buck, but left him for the return journey (when of course

it was too dark!), as we wanted to get at the mugger while taking his siesta, and the sun was already high. The canal bank brought us to a stop, so we slanted off amid the murmuring reeds and stunted thorn-bushes until the river forced us to turn. Then, as they say, a curious thing happened. Beneath a straggly mimosa loomed a large green object. We investigated at a safe distance. Indian fauna were, it is true, strange to us, but we had never even heard of anything like this. We glanced at the robbers. Their intelligence was aroused, but only by the customary, permanent and ill-concealed desire for backsheesh. We made a cautious advance, and the glistening green object behind the tree moved slightly. "Memsahib!" exclaimed a chorus of robbers. Robert and I looked at each other. We were not experienced in the language, but we knew enough Kipling to realise what a "Memsahib" was; still, we could see nothing save this weird green thing from which there suddenly protruded the head and neck of a white and tan pie dog. The mystery seemed about to clear; we made a further cautious advance. The green object resolved itself into an umbrella. Comfortably ensconced within its friendly shade was a mixed trio. The pie dog constituted the first figure of the trinity, and a tin of Huntley and Palmer's biscuits the next. The third was a young lady, having a small-bore rifle lying across her knees, who gazed hungrily at the river. The pie dog regarded us with ill-concealed curiosity. The young lady never

even moved, but continued to gaze. We wonderingly followed the impatient robbers, trying to look as if such meetings fell to our lot every day.

We had not gone a quarter of a mile when the chorus suddenly flopped down, patted the ground invitingly, and pointed round a bend in the opposite bank. Through the twisted stems in the bushes we peered, and there lay the mugger. A big gharial, one of those strange creatures popularly supposed to live on fish alone (though I wouldn't trust one a yard!) sunned himself on the left; between the two was a smaller gharial, and beyond him again an evil-looking little beast, without doubt the mugger's son, sunk in slumber. The bigger gharial kept his ugly button of a snout pointing in the air, his neck almost under the water. The mugger faced us, sound asleep, grinning as only a mugger can grin. I was to have first shot; so through the glass I carefully made out his position, for I knew that if the first shot failed to paralyse I should never get a second. Then we crawled up as far as we dared, and lay amid the bushes. The tall grasses above him bent and whispered in the river breeze, but he still slept on, wearing his cruel, never-changing smile, dreaming of the brown corpses, for there were no white ones now, who came floating down past the shelving mud bank. Then there came a great splashing and commotion in the water, and his companions vanished with a swift ease surprising in such clumsy-looking animals. But he lay there mutely writhing, with blood squirting

from a tiny hole behind his skull. Once he opened his mouth, but only once, for two bullets crashed into the back of his throat, and at length he moved no more. Later we fell in with the Memsahib and her husband. She too had shot a mugger as he lay dreaming his evil dreams on the bank, and for a good half-hour sat watching him. Then a little spurt of life flickered up, and while she watched, he gave a wriggle and fell from the bank into the river and so escaped, for all her cartridges were gone. So it was that the pie dog alone had seen us while she sat gazing at the watery grave of her cherished hopes.

CHAPTER X

BRITISH EAST AFRICA

EVERY one, I suppose, even the most matter-of-fact of men, cherishes in his inmost heart visionary dreams in which his wildest fancies crystallise into solid fact, and his fondest imaginings become permanent realities. For the most part we have to remain content with dreams, our Meccas remain unvisited, the marches of the Never-Never land for ever untraversed, and, at the same time, our illusions unshattered. Now and again the gods smile, and we come to our Mecca, and return, doubly fortunate, our aforetime visions a reality and our memories unspoiled by disappointment.

Africa for many years had been the *Ultima Thule* of my day-dreams; a land, not flowing, it is true, with milk, though there is an abundance of honey, but confining within its boundaries such herds of wild game as no other country in the world can equal. Gone, indeed, are the countless thousands which thronged the high veldt in the days of Cotton Oswell and the great Roualeyn; gone are the days when a man might wander from sea to sea, undeterred by game laws, and reservations, custom-houses or expensive licences, slaying where he would, and, for the most part, taking no thought of trophies which

to-day are unobtainable. Gone, too, are the days, when, but a few miles from the coast, no white man's life was safe. So time rolls on; the old order changes, giving place to new, whilst we who watch can but suppose that it is all for the best, albeit with a sigh, for the years that are gone have carried with them much of the romance of Africa and of the glory which clothed the early hunters of big game.

Nowadays the sportsman reaches and leaves Mombasa with the regularity of a railway time-table. His rifles are stamped; his trophies noted; his boundaries defined; and so he wanders off, a somewhat pathetic figure with his little tape-measure and his English-speaking headman. Later, he returns to quibble over the fraction of an inch in the length of some trophy, and to tell his pals at home of how he met Miss So-and-so, late of the Gaiety, and her noble husband, late of the Guards, so many miles from anywhere in the heart of Africa, whilst his pals say, "Lucky devil! Do you remember the evening, &c., &c.!"

And lucky indeed he is, for though, as Stevenson remarks, it is but a poor world for the gipsily inclined among men, it is but few who look upon the faces of the gods, veiled though they be.

And so one day my dreams crystallised, and I found myself embarked on a bright February morning, upon the most wonderful train journey the world has to show. Across the narrow channel which separates the island of Mombasa from the mainland we rumbled, leaving behind us the flat coast, and

crept slowly and by degrees up through the wooded hills to the high plains and hills which lay beyond. Past Tsavo, which Colonel Patterson has made famous by his tale of its man-eaters; past Makindu, whence, if luck favours, the blue mass of Kilimanjaro, abode of the great spirit, may be seen. From there, onwards until Nairobi, game was almost continually in sight. With the first streaks of dawn I was standing on the outside platform. Soon I was rewarded. A group of hartebeest came slowly into view, as we crept up a gradient, standing like bronze statues, their ugly heads in the air; they never moved, and as we gathered speed, faded, mysterious shadows, into the trees.

What animal did I not gaze upon, crossing the great Athi plains? Lion and rhino were absent, though they are often to be seen, but that was about all. Zebras flicked their heels in sheer exuberance of spirits, and raced madly along within thirty yards of the line. Giraffes, a perpetual smile imprinted on their features, peered at us over the mimosa scrub; uncouth wildebeestes deluded the unwary into the belief that they were buffaloes; hartebeest swarmed in hundreds; through a belt of trees dashed a herd of beautiful impala; three huge boars, the ends of their tails oddly drooping, careered across the flat expanse at our approach; troops of graceful gazelles, both Grant and Thomson, fed quietly within a few hundred yards of the stations at which we stopped; in the distance wary ostriches made bold black splodges

against the faint background. Then we slid over a rise, and there, in a hollow of the plain which stretched far on either hand to meet the embrace of the encircling hills, lay Nairobi.

A worse position for a town it is difficult to imagine. I know one man who was offered most of the land on which it now stands. He not unnaturally concluded that the low hill which rose above the swamp would be a more suitable site for any prospective township, and refused. He is rather sorry now! Yet to me it looked very beautiful lying there in the dip, its white verandahs and red roofs shimmering hospitably in the sun as they peered from the dark, cool clumps of foliage which only half concealed them.

In Nairobi, one word above all others falls on the ear of the new-comer with haunting persistence; every one you meet is engaged in one pursuit. He is "on safari"; just "going on safari," or "just come back from safari." At first it is rather puzzling, and one wonders what this mysterious "safari" can be. Then you discover that it is merely the porters and various impedimenta necessary for a trip up country, or the trip itself.

In the club, perched on the crest of the hill, are some fine trophies, the most noticeable, perhaps, a good bongo. A very curious female Grant, with horns of unusual length, hangs in the dining-room. It looks more like a male with thin horns. The span is quite extraordinary.

Starting a Safari—Nairobi

When I left, the secretary was rather worried about his library, as three hundred and sixty volumes were mysteriously missing. Three hundred and fifty-nine were unaccounted for, the three hundred and sixtieth having been traced to the interior of an exuberant lion cub with literary tastes! For a week we stayed here, getting things fixed up, &c., then, one afternoon we said farewell to certain charming ladies and set off in the wake of our safari. They had started some hours previously and were supposed to camp before we caught them up. Noah, as our headman was christened, was plucky, like all Somalis; but he lacked the administrative capacity of his namesake. Having allowed the porters to go on whilst he bought a sheep, the position of affairs about 5.30 that afternoon was somewhat complicated. We had intended reaching Nyeri by a short cut (nearly always a fallacy!) through the Kikuyu country instead of going round by Fort Hall. The porters lost the short cut; the headman lost his head and the porters; whilst the syce and an askari, who were supposed to show us the way, lost everything, including a pony, us, and themselves. We returned to Nairobi, having thoroughly grasped this latter fact, about eight o'clock at night. The lost ones were located about three miles from the town, and thither we went, late as it was, in order to get a good start the next morning.

I will not weary the reader with an account of the next eight days. My only advice is, if you want to get to Nyeri—go by Fort Hall. The short cut is a snare

and a delusion at present, and until some philanthropist erects a switch-back railway above it, will continue to be so. It runs for the most part up and down steep hills, covered with shambas and banana plantations, and intersected by streams of varying size. At times we had great difficulty in getting the ponies over these latter, as the rocky banks sloped very steeply and the foothold in many places was bad. From one of them I saw a big eel taken. It must have measured quite four feet long and looked rather like a conger.

The natives, of whom we passed many, were a source of great interest until familiarity somewhat staled their variety. They were many of them fine-looking men, stained with a mixture of red earth and the sticky juice of the castor-oil plant. Nearly all the able-bodied men carried arms. A sword in a red sheath on the hip; a bright spear with a long narrow blade, and a knobkerrie was the usual equipment, though a bow sometimes took the place of the spear. These, though formidable-looking weapons, were very soft. Once, when after a wounded hartebeest, being somewhat short of cartridges, I told a Kikuyu guide, who was with me, to stab the animal with his spear. He threw it with all his strength at a few paces distant, and drove the weapon a couple of hand-breadths into the beast's shoulder. By the time he had finished extricating it the weapon was crumpled up like a piece of cardboard.

Many of the Wa Kikuyu have a loop on the sword-



Through the Kikuyu Country



Flocks and Herds

sheath in which they slip their kerries. The Masai nearly always carry them in their hands. The former slit their ear-lobes when young and gradually distend them to an enormous extent. I have seen ordinary tin drinking-cups and small potted-meat jars slipped through the loop thus formed. When not being used to carry something they are looped over the top of the ear. A guide I had had evidently been straining the lobe of his right ear beyond its carrying capacity, as the flesh was torn in two and only dangling strips remained. They also pierce holes in the top of their ears, and gradually enlarge these until they can fasten in them pieces of stick about as big as a pencil and some six inches in length, which flap freely when their owner moves. This gives them a most extraordinary appearance. The women do most of the work. They ornament their wrists, arms, ankles, shins and thighs with long coils of copper and iron wire; though they hardly carry this craze so far as do the fair sex among the Masai. I have seen these women literally swathed in metal coils until one wondered how they could move naturally. Usually a huge coil round their necks, allowed to hang loosely like a gigantic spring, finished off their appearance. Among both tribes the gentler sex are the regular hewers of wood and drawers of water. In addition to the huge bundles which they carry on their backs one can usually discover a small, naked child, clinging frog-like, with shining back, to some portion of its mother's anatomy. The dead are not buried, and it is common to find human skulls,

though curiously enough it is the skull alone which one comes across, lying beside the edge of the path or mouldering in quiet obscurity beneath some bush.

The chiefs were very friendly and usually brought us in some milk, green bananas which were delicious, a sheep or some such present, and received Amerikani, a kind of cloth, in return. The country itself never varied in character, and grew decidedly monotonous after a time, particularly as there was no game to be seen save a couple of small buck, which jumped out of a shamba where they had been enjoying an illicit feed. However, it gave us plenty of time to shake down and get accustomed to our safari.

I should like here to give a word of thanks to Captain Riddell, M.V.O., who fitted us out. No sportsman going on a shooting trip in East Africa could do better than place himself in his hands. He will have the satisfaction of knowing that his safari has been organised by one who has had great personal experience in nearly every kind of sport, and at the same time his monthly expenditure is limited to a given figure. Thus he will be able to calculate within a few pounds exactly what his expenses for the trip will be, a great convenience.

We had about sixty-five porters, who, gradually, as we progressed in our march, collected nearly half as many "gentlemen's gentlemen," to carry their belongings. None of these latter were more than fourteen or fifteen years old and some were mere infants. They used to appear just before we broke

up a camp but mysteriously vanished in the intervals. They were nice cheery little fellows for the most part.

Noah, the headman, was a Somali, as was the cook and my gun-bearer. Our two boys were a standing joke. One said that his name was Soda, so the other was christened Whisky; Whisky and Soda they remained. These, and the three askaris who kept watch over the camp at night, were all more or less respectably clothed. For the rest, their costumes comprised a miscellaneous collection of oddments. Khaki, in various shapes, shades, and sizes predominated; there were three frock-coats; two morning-coats, one worn by a gentleman's gentleman, lacked a tail, and completely, even with this subtracted, extinguished its owner. The torn relics of a light-brown ulster; shorts and trousers which had once been white, in various stages of decomposition, and a motley pile of torn rags completed the list. Soda was the swell of the party in a very swagger tweed coat cut wide at the hips and reaching to his shins. He carried a lime-juice bottle of evil-smelling hairwash, and had shaved a small patch where a parting should have been from the tightly curled and scanty wool on his black pate, the better to look the part. Beauty did not predominate; though one gentleman bore a distinct likeness to a well-known and popular young actor.

They were good chaps on the whole, and we had very little trouble with them. One poor fellow got an abscess on his arm, but that was the only

case of sickness we had which could not be cured by a large dose of Epsom salts.

The three smallest members of the safari, including my friend of the tailless coat, did give a little trouble one night. There was a commotion in the camp; and I left my tent, to discover the culprits in charge of three paint-smeared warriors, whose weapons gave back dull glints from the light of the blazing fire. They had been stealing corn and were captured in the act. It was a wonderfully picturesque, though a somewhat ludicrous scene. In the background Kenia, calm and aloof, her peaked top pricking the dark velvety night. Above, the great company of heaven, twinkling and winking in silent glory, and in the foreground, the glowing fire, the naked paint-smeared savages, and the three cowering little wretches in their absurd caricatures of garments. There was no defence; retributive justice had them fast, and sadder and wiser boys, they retired to the seclusion of their tent after a brief interview with the most stalwart of the askaris.

The next day we reached Nyeri. It is a dear little place set down among the sloping hollows which lie between the beautiful range of the Aberdares and the snow-capped peak of Kenia. The most prominent object among the surrounding scenery is a hill a mile or so distant, on whose wooded summit dwell a race of giant swine known as "forest pigs." They are much larger than the common wart-hog, and are harder to obtain. But few have been killed so far

as I know. Mr. Dann, of the K.A.R.'s, shot one shortly before our arrival. It charged him in some thick bush but was stopped by a timely bullet. The following are its measurements as he gave them to me:—

Height at shoulder	34½ inches.
Length, tip of nose to tip of tail . .	77 "
Girth (dressed)	57 "
Weight (quite clean)	265 lbs.

It would have weighed somewhere about 325 lbs. when alive.

Somewhere within easy reach of the station dwelt a tame but advanced lady of the suffragette order, who recently, however, broke loose. We caught a passing glimpse of her one day (which I felt fully justified the use of the word "advanced"), and incidentally a good snapshot, though I'm afraid it would not do for reproduction.

Here also we met the Old Pioneer and a wonderful collection of stories. As we camped for a week at Nyeri on our return I will say no more about it at present.

Our permits, which one must have to shoot in this district, having been pronounced in order, we left on the morning following our arrival.

The road lay through varied country. A few undulating hills covered with long grass led us through strips of forest to farther hills beyond. Here and there cultivated shambas told of the presence of some village, well hidden amongst the

undergrowth. We had passed from the Kikuyu country into the territory of the Masai, once, in the language of the guide-books, "the scourge and terror of their more peaceful neighbours, but now transformed into a prosperous and law-abiding community." They share with Teddy Payne and others an unconquerable aversion to work, but we found them pleasant fellows to deal with, though of very little use as hunters. Their *bomas* are totally unlike the dwellings of the Wa Kikuyu, and not nearly so picturesque. They are cleverly concealed among trees and foliage though often found in the centres of open plains, in which case their well-defined circles are visible at a great distance.

I called on a chief who thought himself a great swell in a dirty old Burberry and someone's cast-off helmet. He supplied us with a couple of guides, and we shortly afterwards reached a most delightful camping ground by the side of a clear stream. It lay in a broad belt of forest; hanging creepers, old-man's-beard, and glossy foliage of every shade of green surrounded it on all sides and echoed back the murmur of the little river.

Except in the rainy season, the so-called rivers are little burns. The only big rivers I saw were the Tana and the Guaso-Nyiro. The former is by far the bigger of the two. I went out in the evening on the chance of seeing something, and though luck was against me I came across sing-sing, impala, and steinbuck. *Cobus defassa*, or the

sing-sing water-buck, like the commoner *Ellipsi-prymnus* is a very handsome animal, in colour not unlike red deer in winter, though more clumsily built and much heavier about the neck and quarters. Their legs are a great deal darker than the rest of the body, being indeed almost black. The profile of the does is distinctly Semitic. On being alarmed they give a kind of snoofey sneeze. When uncertain wherein the danger lies they make a series of short springs, all their feet in a bunch coming to the ground at the same instant. They then move off to a little distance, but if the stalker keeps perfectly motionless will occasionally come back to satisfy their curiosity, or keep hanging about in an uneasy state of nerves until the lurking peril discloses itself.

A doe once walked up to within forty yards of me, when I was sitting right in the open in full view, but absolutely still. On my making a slight movement she at once crashed off into the surrounding bushes.

Burton and I were both very keen to slay something, so we decided to stay in this camp for a day or two.

The next morning I was off at daybreak, and after a good deal of walking managed to shoot a Jackson's hartebeest. These ugly brutes are possessed of tremendous vitality, and unless hit in exactly the right spot will go for miles. In this particular instance he dropped at once as I had struck him in the neck, but on another occasion I bungled things

sadly. My first shot was low and far back. It did little to stop him. The second was farther forward, but not quite far enough. Three, as he was running away from me, "haunched" him and broke his hind-leg. The next went through his neck, and the last, as he turned, went in at his left shoulder and stuck under the skin on the opposite side, bringing him down. Even then he did not die until a final shot found its way to his heart. This was with a ·275 Rigby Mauser and soft-nosed bullets, and though not a record to be proud of, illustrates the vitality of these animals, and incidentally the importance of putting one's first shot in exactly the right place.

After my first shot at this hartebeest, I fired at one which I took to be the same, and did strike it in the right place. After running a few yards it fell dead. Only afterwards did I discover that it was a cow and not the bull that I had originally fired at. Again, Burton shot a Jackson bull through the shoulder with a ·350 soft-nosed bullet. It jumped straight into the air, ran for a quarter of a mile as hard as it could go, spread its legs, waggled its head and then collapsed. These antelope are finer animals than Coke's hartebeest, or, as they are universally termed, Congoni, though both are excessively ugly. I think that the latter, which are by far the most numerous, are not possessed of such enormous vitality.

That first day's sport in the solitudes of Africa (how much longer will the term apply?) is full of memories. Of Kenia, misty and unreal in the early

light; of the soft jugging note of some bird hidden in the leafy depths of the forest; of the little steinbuck which sneaked off among the grasses, looking very much ashamed of their abnormal hind-quarters and tiny heads; of the shimmering line of zebra, now white, now grey, then a vision of black and white curved stripes and flickering hoofs seen through a curtain of dust; and of the secretary-bird, who stalked sedately away at our approach, looking for all the world like a broken-down dominie with a bundle of old quills behind his bald pate and his thin sticks of legs encased in tightly fitting black trousers.

But the greatest joy of all came as we crossed a flat grassy expanse dotted with thorn scrub which smiled deceitfully at us under a cloud of white blossom. Something moved, and before I had time to utter an exclamation a couple of blue-grey unwieldy masses lumbered noiselessly off within forty yards of us. Had I not felt the heavy tremor of their departure beneath my feet I should have been tempted to fancy them the offspring of a too keen imagination, but a couple of rhinos they undoubted were though it took me some moments to realise the fact. That was my first introduction to them in a state of nature, but the novelty of their appearance never quite wore off.

If the Rocky Mountain goat and the moose appear prehistoric, what can be said of the fauna of Africa? The elephant, rhinoceros, giraffe, all look as if they had drifted down to us, the surviving remnants of a strange age which we can but dimly reconstruct, to

show what uncouth forms of animal life once roamed at large about our world.

It is curious to note the differences of feeling with which a rhino is regarded. Most old residents loathe the sight of one, though they regard an elephant with feelings of positive affection. The novice's first attitude is one of respectful awe. Speaking for myself, on unexpectedly encountering the two just referred to, with nothing in my hand but a small-bore rifle and soft-nosed bullets, my sensations, not to put too fine a point upon it, were tinged with apprehension. The second time they cross one's path they are regarded with equanimity, and after that almost indifference. Of course, if you meet a charging rhino that means business, your feelings are apt to undergo a change.

There was a young rhino on board the steamer on which I returned. His little piglike eyes were quite blue, so that I conclude they change as the animal gets older.

Burton had had a shot at an impala but unfortunately lost it in some thick bush. We pushed on the next morning and kept going for four days, as, though we saw game every day, we were anxious to reach the junction of the Guaso-Nyiro and the Guaso-Narok as quickly as possible. Every evening Noah with optimistic carelessness assured us that we should reach it "the day after to-morrow," and every succeeding evening with elaborate carefulness explained that to do so would entail a march of

eighteen hours. Natives have absolutely no idea of time. They always make some sort of a statement, but two hours to them conveys no more than half-an-hour and *vice versâ*. We passed through some beautiful country and saw vast herds of Masai sheep and cattle. One evening, our camp being close to a ford, nearly four thousand head must have passed within half-an-hour.

We shot a few Thomson gazelles and one good Grant, the best I obtained, close to camp.

A full-grown Tommy, weighed by Burton, scaled, uncleaned, 50 lbs. They are nice little beasts, standing about 25 inches at the shoulder.

Following a wounded Tommy usually involves a stern chase and a long one. They keep pottering on and on, just out of shot, flicking their little tufted tails, and driving their perspiring pursuer frantic. It is hard to make up one's mind what to do when a beast is wounded. It is far better in the majority of cases to wait, and yet all one's inclinations are to follow immediately and try to get the business over at once. If you leave your beast alone for a bit he is nearly certain to lie down before long if he is badly hit; whereas, if he be only slightly wounded, he will in any case, followed or not, lose no time in putting as great a distance between himself and his pursuers as possible.

The head of a Grant's gazelle is, with that of an impala, the finest of the smaller trophies to be obtained in East Africa, and I never ceased to admire

the graceful ways of these splendid little beasts and their beautiful, annulated horns. Those round Kilimanjaro and Naivasha run up to 30 inches and more, but on the Guaso-Nyiro I never saw one above 26 inches. The former heads have also a much wider span, though totally distinct from the Robertsi, a local race, named after Mr. J. Russell Roberts.

The remark which I made apropos of hartebeest applies also to the smaller antelope and gazelle, only even more emphatically so in proportion to their size. Unless hit in exactly the right place, they may go for miles. I have seen them on more than one occasion getting over the ground at a great pace with literally half their entrails dragging on the ground.

A wounded buck will often be viciously attacked by another male, and on three different occasions I saw Grants and Tommies savagely charge a wounded member of their own species. In one case I had knocked over a Tommy which was lying on the ground. I was approaching to perform the final rites when another buck, disregarding my presence, rushed up and made several angry prods at its, as I thought, dying companion.

The attacking buck had a good head, so I shot him. The shot aroused the wounded one, who thereupon jumped up and made off at a steady trot until some thick scrub and an inequality in the ground hid him from view. I never saw him again.

Gazelle seem to like the neighbourhood of deserted



Pitching Camp



Our Safari crossing the Guaso-Nyiro

bomas. I have frequently seen them amid such surroundings. They are full of curiosity, and I often got a shot by making the gun-bearer walk on while I quietly lay down behind a tuft of grass or a stone. They usually watched his movements for a few seconds, though one has to be quick in getting in a shot of this kind.

On 24th February we reached the junction, having left Nairobi on the 9th. As we spent some time in this camp, I shall devote the next chapter to our experiences there.

CHAPTER XI

BRITISH EAST AFRICA (continued)

One of the chief charms of East African sport lies in its variety. A man can never tell exactly what he may meet when starting out from camp in the morning, but of this he may be certain—something will cross his path. It may be a lion, or a rhinoceros, in certain districts even an elephant; it may be only a little steinbuck, or a wart-hog. The particular animal he covets may elude him for the time being, but on anything like good ground something is bound to turn up. It is a great change from hunting in a country where you may go for ten days without firing a shot.

On a three months' trip in East Africa the sportsman should make certain of all the ordinary varieties of game to be found there with the exception of elephant and lion. Of the former animal his chances depend a good deal on the season of the year; of the latter, almost entirely on luck. A buffalo is a certainty provided he works for one. They have increased to a great extent during the past few years, and are now included in the licence, instead of being "an extra." It is not altogether easy, however, to make sure of a good head. I shall refer to this subject later.

I was off at dawn on the morning following our arrival at the junction, and had the most horrible luck all day, my only compensation being a nice Grant.

We found three *Oryx Beisa* as a start and I began stalking them. The particular oryx round the Guaso-Nyiro are a local race, resembling in their face-markings the *Oryx Callotis* found farther south. The dark stripe on the face comes right down below the under jaw; that in the ordinary *Oryx Beisa* finishing above the line of the mouth. However, a sketch will show what I mean better than any verbal description. They are extremely handsome animals, standing about four feet at the shoulder, and very fast and graceful movers, though somewhat heavy-looking when not in motion. They are hard to approach, and have a curiously sullen look when facing one, owing to the dark markings on the head.

I had got within five hundred yards of those I was after, when I noticed what I took for a huge pig coming over the hill behind them. It turned out to be a rhino. In certain aspects they look very "piggy." Just as I was getting within range a herd of zebra came careering over a low ridge and off went the oryx.

I then discovered Burton's syce with the pony strolling along in full view "watching the *Bwana* stalk an oryx!" He didn't wait long!

After about 10.30 A.M. game are usually sheltering under some tree or bush, and are very hard to get near. Zebra and oryx especially are almost

certain to be discovered beneath some spreading mimosa.

I saw a single oryx later, but made a bad miss and lost him. The ground was covered with little prickly balls which stuck to everything which touched them, and made crawling anything but pleasant. When on one's hands and knees a sun helmet is very trying. It hits you in the back whenever you raise your head, and produces a crick in the neck in record time.

After leaving this single oryx I came on a very large herd of gazelles which got my wind at quite three-quarters of a mile. A string of giraffes hove into view about the same time. With their long necks slanting above the crest of a ridge, they looked like a little fleet of sailing boats beating up before the wind. They have a most curious gait. The only thing I can compare it to is the action of certain crippled men on crutches. The body is balanced on the two fore-legs, the hinder pair are then brought quickly forward at the same instant.

The next day I shot a good cow oryx. Like all other antelope they have extraordinary vitality. Noticing a large lump on the side of her neck I investigated, and found a ·450 soft-nosed bullet, which had obviously been there some time, the wound being quite healed over. On returning the next morning, those parts of the carcase which we had been unable to carry away were picked quite clean by hyænas and vultures.



ONE MORNING—



—AND THE NEXT

There are three sciences some knowledge of which every one travelling in a place like Africa should possess, namely, botany, ornithology, and zoology. Of the two former, to my lasting regret I know nothing, and the many wonderful birds, beautiful plants, trees, and flowers which beset the untrodden ways of Africa were, to a great extent, thrown away upon me.

There were birds which whistled in a disconcertingly human manner. Often in the middle of a stalk I have been deluded into thinking that one of the men was trying to signal to me.

I was very anxious to obtain a Gerenuk or Waller's gazelle, as I knew there were some about. I only had one chance, which I lost through no fault of my own. I had seen some feeding on an open patch of ground, and was getting along nicely despite a painful crawl. They were suspicious and kept raising their heads to look in my direction, but a convenient tree intervened to hide my presence. I was just getting within range, when over the crest of the ridge on which they were feeding came Burton's infernal pony. It really was bad luck, being the second time it had happened in three days. If that wretched pony got loose and I was doing a stalk anywhere within five miles, it made a bee-line for me like a needle to a magnet.

Three porters turned up in pursuit and we finally caught the brute. Burton, I was delighted to hear later, had administered on the delinquents' arrival

several severe and well-directed kicks, ably seconded by his gun-bearer. Unfortunately, justice was satisfied at the expense of a long and dusty tramp home, for the syce, dropping the pony's reins, had applied his hands with a doleful yell to the afflicted region, while his charge, seizing the opportunity, with a flick of his heels had made the best of his own way back to camp.

Some one had evidently been doing themselves pretty well, for close to our tents we discovered a gilt-edged menu card with the following inscription:—

E. UASO NYIRO RIVER CAMP.

DINNER. *Feb. 3rd*, '08.
TAPIACO [*sic !*] SOUP.
CUTLETS OF IMPALA.
ROAST LEG OF TOMMY.
APPLE FRITTERS.

However, the partakers of this sumptuous repast did not appear to have done much harm to the game, beyond making them extremely wild.

It took a long time to make the porters understand how to behave when they came out to carry in any meat we might kill. At first they insisted on keeping about four yards behind me. This naturally did not tend to increase my chances of getting near game. My remarks had to be filtered through Hassan, who spoke English fairly well. This took some little time, but at last I thought we had things clear. They were to keep me in sight and to sit down and wait if we saw any game.

One day in particular I had three prize idiots to follow me. They declared on starting that they perfectly understood my instructions. Half-an-hour after the start they were exactly three yards behind. Hassan acted as an expurgating filter. Half-an-hour later I looked round again. Not a porter in sight. Back I went and herded them up. They were a villainous-looking lot, with two and a half eyes between them; the half being a swivelled orbit, as George Graves would say. They had heard me shouting, but for some reason best known to themselves thought I wanted them to go slowly.

Then I saw some giraffe; there were twenty-two, swinging over the sky-line with their stilted lounging gait. A few minutes afterwards I looked back to see how my collection was getting on. There they were, waving, gesticulating, brandishing their sticks and pointing. However, as the giraffe were about a mile off, I had seen them for some ten minutes previous to this exhibition, and did not in any case want to shoot one, it didn't much matter.

A family party of rhino and a herd of about forty oryx, with some ostriches and zebra, next made their appearance. I heard what I took to be a dog barking. It was exactly like a collie, and I asked Hassan what animal made such a noise.

"Zebra!" he replied, and sure enough it was, though it took me some time to realise it.

By-and-by, crossing a slope covered with bush my Kamba gun-bearer pointed to something red among

the trees. This turned out to be a cow eland, and I presently made out a large number. A herd of impala were feeding near, and a couple of oryx, some gazelle and zebra completed the group.

By the way, when spying from behind a tree get the shady side of it, as then the sun will not glint on your glass. A convenient nullah assisting us, we got safely ensconced behind a big cactus. Within a hundred yards some eland were sheltering under a tree, and as I watched more came stringing out of the bushes on my right to join them. In colouring they were almost exactly like a red deer hind. They were all cows and calves with one or two young bulls, and must have numbered nearly fifty. It seemed unlikely that there should be no good bull with them, so we decided to wait for a bit. It was well we did so, for last of all, a single cow accompanied by a fairish bull suddenly made their appearance, sedately walking towards the rest of the herd.

I had only a ·275, but he gave me a beautiful chance at about 60 yards, and one shot high in the shoulder rolled him over like a rabbit. It was curious to hear the tiny crack and see the huge animal drop as if struck by lightning. The cow dashed wildly off and passed me within ten yards, but unfortunately I could not get at the camera in time.

The hoofs of a bull eland make a noise like castanets. They can be plainly heard at a distance of quite two hundred yards. I was sorry I had shot this bull afterwards, as down on the Tana I

saw several with much finer heads. It is very hard to make up one's mind whether to shoot an animal with a fair head which one sees for the first time. If passed by, a better head may never present itself; if taken, the odds are one sees several beasts with finer horns.

The gazelle had walked out into the open about a hundred and eighty yards off, and as the buck had a nice head I shot him.

Burton got two nice oryx the same day, and I saw a good rhino on my way back to camp, but could not get a shot at him. I had not finished with my villainous trio of attendants. I left them to bring in the heads, skins, meat, &c., but they never turned up in camp. We sent out search parties, who did not succeed in finding them. On my return from hunting the following day I was met with the pleasing intelligence that the lost ones had arrived minus my eland head. Finding that they were lost in the dark they had thoughtfully deposited my head beneath a tree, and when daylight came found they had lost that as well as themselves. Three days later it was recovered, but the scalp was hopelessly ruined.

Eland are better eating than any animal I shot in Africa, being beautifully juicy and tender.

On my way back to camp I had fallen in with the Colonel. He, his wife, and a friend were camping close to us, and that evening we fraternised over a cup of coffee. The Colonel, it appeared, was finish-

ing his trip, the only thing wanting to complete his bag being a lion.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I have lionitis badly! I've hunted them on foot and I've hunted them on mules. I've sat up night after night in a zareba listening to a kid bleating, trying not to clear my throat and having the whole affair spoilt because the gun-bearer snored, or had nasal catarrh. The lion got the kid, but I never got the lion. On the subject of lions I am a sceptic!"

"There are a few round here," I remarked.

"So I saw," replied the Colonel, "but you can't get them in this bush. A lion in the open I don't mind; but in the bush—no, sir! Not if his teeth were stuffed with diamonds."

I changed the subject. "Did you get any hippo on the Tana?" I inquired.

The Colonel snorted. "Hippo!" said he. "Hippo! Just in front of us were some qualified big game hunters. They weren't English or American, I'm glad to say, for the honour of our respective nations. Well, one morning, I heard such a cannonading down at that hippo pool, I thought the Masai must be on the war-path. How many shots do you think were fired?" he asked suddenly.

I ventured a modest twenty.

The Colonel laughed derisively. "Twenty?" said he. "No, sir-r! Ninety-six shots from ·450 calibre rifles were fired at those un-fortunate am-phibians—and they killed four." He relapsed into gloomy silence.

The Colonel's wife got lost and the Colonel himself charged by a buffalo, "but that," as Kipling remarks, "is another story."

I went up to my eland's carcase the next morning, to see if a lion had been near, and within fifty yards of our camp found the tracks of a lion and lioness. Following these, we found that the lion had sneaked up through the bushes and passed within six inches of the back of my tent. If I had put out my hand I could have touched him! I was sound asleep and never heard a movement. Burton said he meant to have me but didn't like the smell of my hair-wash, which was distinctly rude, and not true as I had none!

There were a lot of vultures round the spot where I had left the eland, and on getting up to it we found the tracks of three lions. The carcase itself had vanished. We tracked the lion which had taken the meat, hoping to find him gorged. Under a thorn-bush, flanked by grasses and overhung by bower-birds' nests, too dainty a place for so coarse a meal, we found the remains of the eland. I had never quite realised the enormous strength of a lion until I saw the fore-quarters, spine, a portion of the hind-parts and some skin and offal fully a quarter of a mile from the spot where we had left them!

Whilst we were tracking this beast, the porters whom we had left some distance off saw a lioness pass within a few hundred yards, going slowly up the hill. It was most annoying to know that there were so many about and never to be able to get a shot at one.

We returned the next day, but the carcase had been devoured and we found nothing but tracks. That evening I went out with Burton, who shot a zebra as bait for lions. They are very fond of these animals. On 2nd March I left camp early and soon found lion tracks. It was interesting to watch my Masai guide and Hassan puzzling them out. Little marks and scratches in the sand which meant nothing to me told them a plain tale. I thought that they were in fault at times, and that the displaced particles of earth or trodden blades of grass must be accidental, but sooner or later in some soft red patch of earth would follow the great round pug marks which told us that we were on the trail. For two hours or more this went on. Then the tracks led into some bushes. As we got closer there came a jump, and a thud, and the soft pad, pad, of some heavy animal moving off. On we went, and there a few minutes later, on the opposite slope of a shallow valley, stood two lions. I can hardly bear to write of it even now, for I never saw one again. Great, tawny brutes, with something dog-like about them, they watched us for some time. The lioness, for one was a female, lay with her head sunk to the level of a tuft of grass, behind which she crouched, whilst the lion, higher up the hill, moved slowly about among the rocks. Then the pair of them slunk off. Some hours later, by dint of careful hard work on the part of Hassan, we had tracked them to a clump of bushes. The tracks went in but did not come out again on the

far side. The inference was obvious. A narrow isthmus of bush connected the clump with a thick strip of undergrowth, and just on the other side of this isthmus we placed ourselves. Then we sent round the Kamba to heave in rocks. At the first one the lioness jumped out within ten yards of him and back again. He rushed round to where we were standing, making excited signals.

"He says the lions are out!" cried Hassan, and we both raced round the clump. No lions to be seen. Then the Kamba explained what had happened. Back we went, and there, in the little strip of connecting bush, were the tracks. Whilst we had been on the far side they had escaped. I often heard lions after that, but never saw one again.

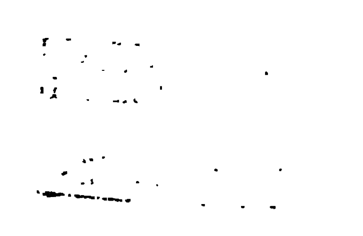
Burton visited his zebra the morning after he had shot it, and found no signs of lions. The next morning, thinking there would be nothing there he did not trouble to stalk it, but strolled casually up, and there were five lions on the carcase! This same day I shot a big puff adder with a beautifully marked skin, the only snake, with one other exception, which I saw in East Africa.

We had been following the lion tracks under a hot sun for about seven hours and I was very done. Often when the glare from the parched ground grew almost intolerable, and the low distant hills were hidden in a blue haze, I longed for the cool wet greens of a Highland birch-wood. I saw the burn come laughing and murmuring down the hillside among the grey

moss-grown rocks, and felt again the cool wet bracken about my feet. But only in my imagination. The glare did not diminish; consequently when I came upon some impala an egregious miss at a good buck was the result.

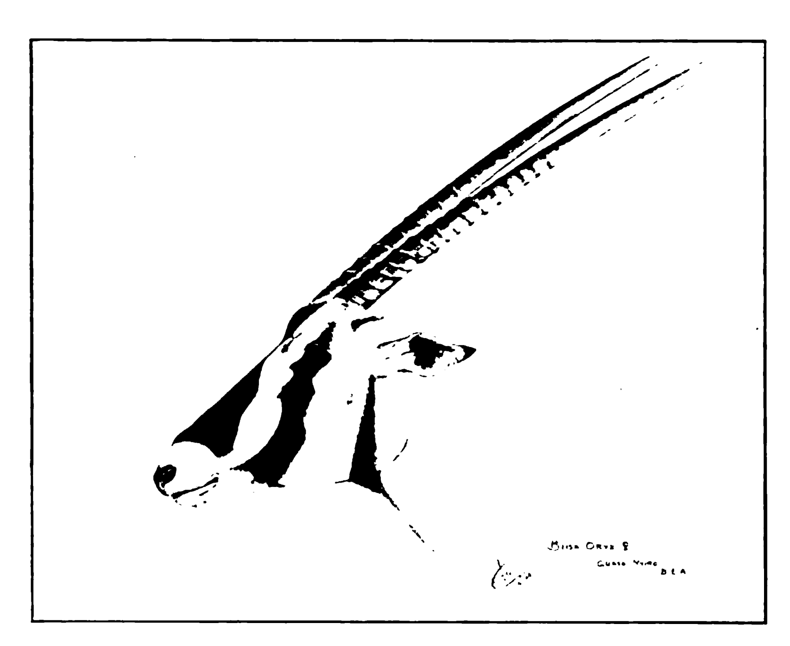
As I was stalking him, there suddenly came an indignant snort from a bush about ten yards off, and an old rhino jumped to his feet looking very annoyed at having been roused from his slumbers. I thought at first he was going to charge us, but he blundered off, and we saw his round dumpy quarters disappear over the nearest sky-line at a fast trot.

It is extraordinary how quickly rhinos can move, considering their heavy appearance. It looks as if they would take about ten minutes to get round, but in reality they can turn on a sixpence. Later on in the evening I stalked a couple of oryx which I came on suddenly in some cactus scrub. Whilst so doing, my old friends the impala put in an appearance. There were seven bucks together, and one with a nice head giving me a good chance. I managed to get him. The oryx were just the other side of the bush, and hearing the shot, they took a few steps forward. Singling out the one which I took to be the bull, I dropped him, and on going up was rather sorry to find that I had shot another cow. It is hard to distinguish the males from the females. Their horns are almost exactly alike, though the bulls' are thicker and more heavily ringed. Almost my last day in this camp I saw a very nice Grant. After one miss at longish





BEAUTY AND THE BEAST



BEISA ORYX (*female.*) (*See page* 187)

range he made a big detour, but eventually came round almost to where I had first seen him. I followed him all the time but could not get a shot as there was a doe with him, and if I got out of sight of one, the other was very much on the look-out. They finally disappeared into a cup-shaped hollow and fed round at the back of a little kopje. I had climbed on the top of this when I heard Hassan whistle, and looking round, saw a hyæna just emerging from some rocks. I got him, and then, running to the top of the knoll, found the Grant trotting forward within easy range. The buck obligingly stopped and the next minute fell dead. This was the second occasion on which I witnessed another buck attack a wounded companion. A smaller Grant with some seven or eight does had been watching the two intruders, and seeing one fall he rushed up and began prodding him with his sharp horns. I was very much tempted to shoot him for his unsportsmanlike conduct, but his small head saved him.

That night was the opening of the great Honey Question, which exercised our minds for some days. A note arrived from the Commissioner at the Government station of Rumuruti saying that he had received complaints from the Masai stating that their honey was being stolen by our porters. We made inquiries, but were told by Noah that our men were much too virtuous to dream of stealing honey, and that it was the Colonel's men, most unmitigated scoundrels, who were the real culprits. Some of our safari looked

quite capable of murder if they thought they could gain anything by it, but not talking Swahili it was rather hard to get to the bottom of the matter. The Masai and Wa Kikuyu place big hollow wooden drums and tubs in convenient trees and wait for a swarm of bees to settle there. Any bees which come are the property of the owner of the tub. I have seen as many as sixteen of these tubs in one tree. The honey is excellent when strained, and has the dark appearance of heather honey. There are two kinds of bees, the best honey being obtained from small black ones.

As the Commissioner persisted in his accusation we thought the best thing to do would be to go into Rumuruti, a two days' march, and let him investigate the matter. This we accordingly did. On the way, I shot a nice impala and saw some more rhino, though I didn't shoot any. One had a number of rhinoceros birds clinging to his back and sides. Every time he tossed his head, which was frequent, they would fly up in a little cloud and then re-alight. I have seen these birds on eland and also oryx.

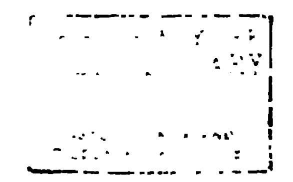
In the early morning guinea-fowl were usually in evidence. They always reminded me of a fairy story I once read about some strange beings who were made of cardboard. They looked very fat sideways, and could hardly be seen end on. It isn't quite as bad as that with guinea-fowl, but they shrink considerably. When flying against the sky they resemble black-game.



A Hewer of Wood (*see page* 173)



Honey Tubs



Just before reaching Rumuruti Burton shot our first water-buck, on the edge of a large swamp. It was a sing-sing.

We had lunch with the Commissioner, who entertained us most hospitably during our stay at Rumuruti, and told us some amusing yarns of the various sportsmen whom he had met.

There was one young gentleman who did himself very well. From Nakuru, 450 miles from Nairobi, he wired to Smith-Mackenzie, the big firm at Mombasa, "Send one hundred laying hens at once." The hens were sent, Smith-Mackenzie remarking at the same time that they were not philanthropists! He started off with his hundred laying hens and an enormous safari, and stayed away so long that his people began to get anxious. They wired to the authorities that he was to be returned at all costs. Fortunately, for the sake of their pockets, he turned up about the same time as the arrival of the cable.

Talking of Nakuru reminds me of another story I heard. The local inhabitants were much plagued by the number of pie dogs which roamed at large. After much cogitation they hit on a plan for getting rid of them. All their preparations having been made and the District Engineer taken into their confidence, they waited for a suitable day when the "mixed down" was signalled. Then those that were in authority sent out all the policemen and askaris they could find, with orders to capture every dog within sight. The dogs arrived in cartloads and were

unceremoniously stuffed into the dog box attached to the "mixed down." At last every atom of space was filled with dog, and the train departed. Then the District Engineer, filled with a wicked joy, despatched the following telegram to the local babu two stations down the line:—

"Dog in dog box without ticket."

Full of zeal, the babu hurried out to meet the "mixed down." It was very much mixed that day. No sooner had he opened the door than he was overwhelmed by a living avalanche of pie dogs of all shapes, sizes, and colours. They have not yet been returned to Nakuru.

Complaints with regard to stolen honey were still being received, so the whole outfit were lined up and the Commissioner harangued them, with particular reference to their parentage and the ultimate destination and punishment of honey thieves. Seventy-nine honey tubs had been broken and destroyed, their value being about R.50.

In spite of the Commissioner's oration the whole safari strenuously denied having touched any honey. Then he began asking them, one by one, if they had taken it. The second man in the line was my one-eyed friend, the same who lost the eland head. He, thinking that those who denied it were going to get *kiboko* (otherwise a whacking), turned informer and "smelt out" the syce, quite the laziest man I ever saw, and two others. These three, seeing the game was up, admitted that they had taken a

little honey, but that the others began it. The others promptly said they were lying. However, the syce and his associates proceeded to indicate sixteen more of the guilty ones, and finally the whole lot, with the exception of one fat old ruffian of about fifty, who had, I suppose, lost his appetite for sweet things, were proved guilty. They had been accustomed to steal it when collecting firewood, whilst some daring spirits, eluding the headman and the askaris, had sneaked out at night whilst we were asleep and had a high old time. Unfortunately, they were too many to *kiboko*, which would have been by far the best punishment, and they got off with a fine. The one-eyed villain, whom I should dearly loved to have seen soundly flogged, created a diversion by muttering something to the Commissioner.

I asked him what he had said, and he replied, "He asks how the Wa Nyam Wezi can be guilty as they cannot climb trees!"

Then he turned and said something in Swahili to the glowering porter. A few minutes later the latter was swarming up a thorn tree with the agility of a monkey, whilst an askari stood underneath with a rhino hide whip in his hand! His companions roared with laughter. They are just like children, easily amused and as easily depressed. There was no more honey-stealing after that.

I got a good many steinbuck near Rumuruti. They seem to like the neighbourhood of swamps, and

lie up in long grass or under bushes during the heat of the day. When alarmed they usually stand for a few seconds, unless "jumped," before going off at full speed for a couple of hundred yards. Then they stop and look back. If again disturbed they sneak off and keep going until well away; if not, they remain until they are sure the alarm was false. These small antelope are hard to get as they see you long before you know they are there.

The gazelle round Rumuruti have much better heads than those farther south, and Burton got one near here with horns of fifteen inches.

One day, whilst out after Tommy, I saw a lady riding towards me, whom I had last seen looking very smart in the Park. She will, I am sure, forgive me for saying that I hardly recognised her! She had been fortunate enough to kill one of the big forest pigs of which I have spoken before, though I have not its measurements. A Tommy with even a better head than Burton's had also fallen to her rifle. This same day I shot a big cerval cat, with a beautifully marked skin; the only one I obtained.

Whilst we were at Rumuruti news came in that an unfortunate gun-bearer had been nearly killed by a wounded buffalo. The brute had driven a horn right through his ribs into the lungs and tossed him high in the air. He was taken into Fort Hall and ultimately recovered, though he had a very narrow shave.

A good buffalo head may be considered the crown-



BEFORE THE DAWN—BUFFALOES IN MIST



STEINBUCK

ing glory of a collection of East African trophies. A lion is in a different category, for, as I have said before, luck plays a predominant part in his undoing. Apart then from lions, the only animal which I should put on a par with the buffalo is an elephant. In the ordinary course of events the former is the more dangerous, though a lifetime devoted to elephant-hunting would leave but little lacking in the way of excitement! On a sportsman's licence one buffalo is now allowed to be shot. Formerly £5 had to be paid for the privilege, but they are now increasing very fast. Indeed, provided that the present excellent regulations are maintained, I see no reason why there should not be as much game in East Africa in the future as at the present time. The late Arthur Neumann told a friend of mine on his return from his last visit there that he thought the game was quite as plentiful as when he first started elephant-hunting round Mount Kenia; that some species even had increased. The game laws are good, but like all game laws, good or bad, difficult to enforce. As one of the Government officials said to me, "There is nothing to prevent a man shooting an animal with a poor head, leaving it there, and shooting another. A man should consider it a point of honour not to shoot more than his licence entitles him to." This is quite sound and I am the last person to advocate the breaking of game laws, but it is impossible to withhold one's sympathy in many cases. Take for instance the following. A keen sportsman not overburdened with this world's

goods scrapes together enough to stand himself a couple of months after big game. It will probably cost him, at any rate in Africa, the best part of £300. On his licence he is allowed to kill one buffalo bull, an animal which he has never seen in the flesh but worshipped from afar.

Well, off he goes in the early dawn to seek his quarry in thick bush. Everything is against him. He is forced to seek the animal in surroundings of its own choosing, an animal, too, gifted with wonderful hearing, excellent powers of scent, and good sight; one, moreover, which in spite of its size is extremely difficult to see. Our friend being a novice has crawled through dense undergrowth for some considerable distance, is perspiring freely, and a little over-keen. All his nerves are on the stretch. Suddenly there is a sniff, a snort, and a crash. They have "got" him. The gun-bearer, also over-keen, quite as much if not more so than his master, seizes his arm and points out a dark mass half hidden in the shadows. Interlacing stems and creepers cover the greater part of it.

"Is it a good head?" queries the quivering sportsman.

"Shoot! Shoot!" mutters the gun-bearer.

The wish is father to the thought "Hang it! he ought to know; I will have a shot. I'm sick of this eternal crawling day after day and never a chance!"

Thoughts like these flash through his brain; possible future regrets are dismissed; he has his shot,

and is filled with everlasting remorse, for instead of the forty-five inch, rough and scarred horns of which he has dreamed so long, he sees, despite the big body, the smooth short horns of a young bull. It is true that a good taxidermist can make a wonderful job of it and send him a magnificent bull's head on which to dilate to his friends, but it isn't quite the same thing! Now, I do not say that this kind of thing does happen, but it is quite possible. A great deal of hardship is involved, and under the circumstances many men would leave their buffalo where he fell, go on and kill another. Of course, in open country, there is no excuse, but in thick bush it is another matter. I got up quite close to a herd of buffalo one day and was within a few yards of a large cow.

"Shoot! Shoot!" hissed Hassan.

I told him to keep quiet, and asked him after why he wanted me to shoot a cow.

"Oh!" said he, "I was so anxious for the Bwana to kill something!"

Would it not be possible to make an alteration in the game laws by which any one, under a genuine misapprehension, killing a buffalo below a certain measurement, could forfeit the head and obtain permission to shoot a second one? No one, I should think, wants deliberately to shoot a small head, though in the excitement of the moment horns are apt to enlarge!

The crux of the matter, of course, rests in the words "genuine misapprehension."

We had heard of a nice well-conducted herd of buffalo within a couple of days' march, and as the Colonel had impressed upon us the ferocity of those to be found near the Tana, we determined to go after them.

CHAPTER XII

BRITISH EAST AFRICA (*continued*)

OUR road lay for the most part through well-wooded country, having for its centre-piece a fascinating little stream. Fires had swept along the banks, but here and there were shady nooks and corners fresh and smiling with every shade of green. Overhead white masses performed their daily evolutions. I have never seen such a land for clouds as is Africa. The mornings are clear. About noon little white fluffy bits of cotton-wool came floating up, "out of the everywhere into the here," to spy out the land. Then, as if by magic, battalions and armies of them fill the heavens, each distinct and separate. A hard-cut line, such as you see in old engravings, marks them out below; above, they are full of soft curves and dazzling domes. Later, as the sun lies dying, they mingle and coalesce into great white thrones for gods and goddesses, clean and pure where the falling rays strike, and holding on their earthward side deep blues and sensuous purple loveliness, as though all that was base and evil in them shrank from the clean freshness of the upper heights. Then from bright sunlit glades, with all the blue of God's heaven above and the pleasant messages of water running beneath a clear sky, we

passed into a tall gloomy forest whose twisted stems and roots writhed in strange and tortured shapes. Trailing mosses and dead hanging creepers swung pendant and without life from the grey branches, whilst through the network they formed the sunlight fell in irregular specks and splashes on the mouldering floor. Even the song of the birds seemed tentative and hushed as though they feared some curse, foreordained, would fall on any sound which dared to intrude on so awful a stillness. The wind, a mysterious presence, stole overhead silently and almost unfelt. The dark glossy leaves and sombre foliage seemed unaware of its passing. Huge deserted shrubberies flanked by tall grasses and giant forest trees awaited our coming. The rank undergrowth seemed but the forerunner and usher of unweeded lawns and rusted gates. In the heart of the world just such a forest should hold the castle of the Sleeping Princess. At every turn I thought to see it standing tall and grey, its battlemented turrets rising above the creepers which hung lank and mocking on every hand. I could all but see the untended yew hedges which had been set to mark the boundaries of some forgotten pleasure-garden, and strained my ears to catch the footstep of one who came to meet me. And then the magic of my mood passed and I knew I looked in vain. From the gloomy wood we crossed into openings and dells, hot with the African sun and scented with the memories of breezes stirring about some long neglected garden; and so back into the world of realities.

The little stream led us to a pleasant camping ground, within a few hundred yards of which I shot an impala with a very nice head, the best of half-a-dozen who were feeding together.

A year or so previously a friend of mine camped in the same spot. Another safari was close by. The white men were dining together when from the other camp arose a great uproar. Every one rushed out, to find that a lion had carried off one of the porters. Hearing the brute growling, one of the party fired. The lion decamped, and they found the porter dead, his throat horribly torn. My gun-bearer was one of the party. He wanted to leave the man's body and sit up with a rifle in case the lion came back. Rather a cold-blooded proceeding! He was not allowed to carry out his plan, but the lion came back three times in order to get his kill.

The next day Burton and I killed a very fine Jackson hartebeest. I broke his leg and he galloped right past Burton, who shot him within fifty yards. Whilst the skin was being taken off two Masai came up, from one of whom we bought a good armlet made of buffalo horn and a long spear. This man had a distinctly Jewish type of feature. There were some eland about, which Burton tried to get a shot at but without success.

After deciding on a camp from which to hunt buffalo we sent some natives out to procure a couple of Wa 'Ndorobo guides. This tribe is more or less dependent on the Masai, and is really the only hunting

tribe in East Africa. A few days afterwards two of them turned up and promised to show us buffalo. The following day was Sunday, so we had a rest and I made some sketches.

On the Monday morning we sallied out accompanied by the Wa 'Ndorobo. I had no luck, though I gained in experience; but Burton had the good fortune to kill an old bull within two hours of leaving camp.

It was dark when we started, though by the time we reached the summit of a hill which rose behind the camp, the dawn was breaking. As we passed along the edge of a thick belt of trees something moved close at hand. Hassan wanted to plunge into the bushes, which would have been absolutely idiotic, apart from any danger, as we could not have seen a yard. We accordingly waited, and as the light grew stronger went on. Presently a large clearing opened out before us, covered with dead and dying forest giants, here standing gaunt and upright, there mouldering to dust, the last survivors of some forgotten fire. Bracken, tall, brown, and withered, rose high as we ourselves, mingling with yellow grasses; but in the far shadows I saw something black move and caught sight of a shiny body. From behind a withered tree a dark mass protruded, which at last shaped itself into the head of a buffalo. Hassan gaily advanced until he got a dig in the ribs which, in nautical language, brought him up with a round turn. The head still remained,

but the sex of the owner I could not determine. Hassan took the glass. The head moved into the shadows. "Buck!" said he triumphantly. To him any male animal was a buck—buffalo, elephant, lion, or antelope. In a similar manner a lion always "shouted," as did a bird. At first it sounded rather funny to be told he could hear a bird shouting. The 'Ndorobo during our investigation had prudently remained in the rear, but we made him follow the tracks, though it was obviously not a job for which he had much liking. For a long time we followed through dense bush, our only help the buffalo trails which crossed in all directions.

Imagine looking down on a forest from a balloon. It covers low hills which slope away to the plain until they imperceptibly melt into one. Here and there are openings such as I have described. Spits of bush run out into the plain in the wake of low ridges which are themselves engulfed in forest. This, save for the open clearings in which the grass stands yellow, appears dense and green. Now come underneath. Overhead the thorns and evergreens almost shut out the light of day. Dense thickets close in on every side, but from the grass-grown clearings you may see tunnel-like passages half obscured by growth. Follow one of these and you are in a buffalo trail. They cross and re-cross in every direction until at length they run into bare patches of earth overhung by twisted, curving roots and creepers. The grass beneath is flat and beaten.

Signs of cattle are everywhere, and there comes to your nostrils a faint familiar smell. That is where the buffalo spend the day.

After a long toilsome passage through one of these tunnels, we reached such a spot.

The 'Ndorobo, as we drew near, appeared far from happy. Watering freely at the eyes, he turned piteous backward glances in our direction with the appearance of a small and terrified terrier. A slight sound caught our attention and we all stopped. Then, nothing further transpiring, Hassan advanced. The next second I heard a crash. A confused vision of the 'Ndorobo and Hassan mixed up in a thorn-bush presented itself, and I, thinking that a herd was charging, incontinently fled. They were charging too, but fortunately for us, in the opposite direction.

The next day I was off at 4.15 A.M. As Burton stayed in camp, I borrowed his hunter, a very plucky little man though not so good a tracker as the other. We had a long morning's work which can be described in a few sentences. Careful tracking, bent double, through dense bush; a slight sound in front; a still more stealthy advance—then a terrific snorting and crashing which gradually died away. It was terribly hard work but most exciting, and left one but little inclined for heavy exercise after the mid-day meal.

There was a Masai village near, whither I strolled one afternoon and encountered one of the fattest babies I have ever seen. From its bloated

appearance, it had just finished an enormous repast. It had never seen a white man and I had never seen such a fat baby, so we stared at each other with mutual enjoyment for some minutes. It was bow-legged, crawling with flies, and very much astonished. A necklace of blue beads and a small piece of string tied round its distended tummy constituted all the available wearing apparel, but it did not seem to want any more, as it threw the piece of string away with an air of great disgust. We made rather friends with each other, and, with its father's approval, I gave it the stump of my cigar, which it proceeded to puff with the air of a connoisseur.

The chief was a jolly old man, who used to come over to our camp every day with presents of milk and sheep for which he would take no payment, though we delighted his heart with some coils of wire and a few yards of cloth.

One morning I was aroused by a lion "shouting" in some bushes close to camp, but he did not prolong his visit until daylight.

The whole week I did nothing but hunt buffalo. I was close to them many times; but the bush was so thick that it was impossible to get a clear view, and I was determined to get a respectable head.

For three hours one morning we tracked some buffalo spoor. Then the wind changed slightly and we heard a great commotion in the bushes a hundred yards or so ahead. The going was very bad, but we

dashed off in the direction of the sound, hoping for a shot. I and Hassan were standing by a tree listening when I noticed a Masai we had as guide squinting horribly (though this was habitual), and running towards us. We signed to him to stop, but he came on, wearing a sheepish grin, and shinned up a small tree, where his squint if possible became even more pronounced. Directly afterwards four buffalo came crashing past. They pulled up dead in a cloud of dust within a few yards of us and then dashed off at right angles. One was a bull but he had a poor head.

It was on 21st March that my desires were realised. I told Noah to call me at 3.45 so that we could catch the buffalo going into the wood, which they always did at the first streaks of light. He made a mistake, and it was not until an hour later that we left camp.

Somewhere out in the East the birth of a new day was tremulously stirring. Before she sank beneath a low range of hills the pale yellow moon silvered a few tiny long-drawn clouds. Down in the swamp a pessimistic old bull-frog hoarsely stated his opinion to the awakening world, that life was a horrid bore! An unseen chorus echoed and reiterated his statement. As the first faint pink flush against whose delicate purity the tops of the thorn-bushes and mimosas were softly etched grew stronger, birds, until then silent in the shadowy thickets, began to twitter and call. We reached the top of the hill, and Kenia showed a faint,

pearly mass on the horizon. Then, without warning, a red tinge showed about it and the mountain seemed to grow darker and more distinct. In the blue shadow of the valley little twinkling lights marked the position of the sleeping camp. It was very cold, and we were glad to walk as rapidly as the increasing light allowed. Big belts of forest held us back, and alternated with wide open spaces starred with lilies which glimmered palely at us under foot. For a long time we pushed on with no signs of game.

Through a narrow pathway cut in the bush we emerged on the slope of a large glade. The greater part lay in deep shadow, though the farther side was tinged with the glow which comes before the sun is fully risen. The side on which we stood sloped to an abrupt dip in which the bush grew thick, and just on the edge three buffaloes were feeding. They fed over into the bush, but presently emerging walked slowly up the opposite side with the rest of the herd. Eleven, or rather ten (for one was a small calf) of the great brutes moved sluggishly up the hill. It was the first good view I had had in the open. They were quite black save for the light patch behind the foreleg which showed when they were in motion. There was not a good bull amongst them, and I began to think my ill luck had not yet finished. Then, on the far edge of the bush, at the top of the hill, Hassan saw something move, and as we looked a herd of about twenty buffalo fed into view. On our right, some distance off, a leopard was howling, and at the sound they raised

their heads. I made out two bulls, one above and one below the herd, either of which were good enough to shoot. The 'Ndorobo sneaked back a little way and we followed. Very cautiously, and keeping in the deepest shadow, he crept along the edge of the trees. The buffaloes were right out in the open and about six hundred yards off. Hassan seemed to have got quite stupid, as he kept stopping in order to indulge in long stares at our quarry. We only had one chance, to reach the cover whilst they were still in the open, so I hurried him on. We reached the dip safely and got into the bush, though I could see a cow a few hundred yards off, fortunately with her back turned.

We passed the strip of bush through which the first lot had fed and up amongst a lot of burned trees and grass. The latter made a great rustling, and I was afraid we should be heard as we were getting very close. The 'Ndorobo peered round a corner of the undergrowth and drew back. I crept gingerly forward and imitated his example. Neither bull was in sight, but an old cow, the only beast I could see, was placidly chewing the cud within thirty yards of our hiding-place. She raised her head but I kept perfectly still, and she went on feeding, unconscious of the tumult of anxiety for which she was responsible.

Feeding out of sight, in a minute she reappeared, this time certainly within ten yards of us. I could see the sunlight glinting on her eye quite distinctly, and was horribly afraid she would give the whole show away, for there were four or five beasts in

sight by this time. I do not think that buffaloes can have anything very extraordinary in the way of sight; no deer nor antelope would have stayed a moment if they had been in this cow's place. It was the most exciting moment I ever experienced. She gave a prolonged stare at our bush, which only consisted of a few dead twigs, and fed on. Two young bulls were nosing each other's backs; an inquisitive calf came sniffing round the heels of an irritable old cow where he had no business, got a kick from the old lady for his pains, and then over a small rise, half hidden in the burnt scrub, came a bull. He walked quietly along, about forty yards off. I dared not wait, as the next step would have brought the old cow right on top of us. His head was hidden by the flank of another beast but I could see his shoulder, and so, with an inward prayer, fired. I have a confused recollection of giving him the second barrel as a cloud of dust and vanishing heels swept past me. Pandemonium raged for a few brief seconds, and then in an astonishingly short space of time there was dead silence. Only a drifting cloud of dust was there to tell us of the buffalo's presence at all. We crept round the corner, hoping to see the bull lying on his side kicking. Absolutely nothing presented itself, save a blank and uninviting wall of bush. My hopes sank but revived immediately as a grunting cough came from behind the leafy screen. Hassan declared he could see the bull looking very sick and walking slowly forward. We all went

into the bush, and presently the 'Ndorobo, executing one of his mysterious flank movements, came noiselessly back to say that he had found him. On we went again as carefully as possible, and I confess that I scanned every thicket pretty closely as all the horrible stories I had ever heard of wounded buffalo bulls came crowding to my mind. Then I saw him, or rather a dark mass which might have been ten yards off or a hundred, for it is well-nigh impossible to estimate distance in thick bush; the eye loses all sense of perspective. I got ready, and Hassan threw a small piece of stick into the bushes. Instantly there were three plunges; one from the bull, one from the Masai, and one from the 'Ndorobo. The latter vanished in a manner peculiarly his own, the Masai got up a tree, and the bull stood still. I could see him rather more clearly, and from the sound I knew that he was close. As well as the intervening bushes would let me, I took aim and fired. Not a sound succeeded the shot. I could see his horns, however, so after waiting for a few minutes we had another stick-throwing competition. No signs of life following we walked up to where he lay, fifteen yards off, stone dead. The first shot, hitting him in the shoulder, had gone diagonally through his body and come out at his loins. The last lucky bullet had entered just behind his ear and dropped him like a log. He was a young beast, his horns nearly at their best; and though not a big head, and lacking the roughened bosses which add so much to the appearance of an



An Old Buffalo Bull—



—and a Young Bull in his Prime before his Horns are worn down

old bull, he made a very handsome trophy and one which I greatly value, as I had worked hard for a week and felt that I deserved him. An hour or so later a black horde of porters arrived. I will not weary the reader with a detailed account of what followed. If his edition of Shakespeare's works is the same as mine, he will find it concisely described in "Macbeth," Act I., Scene 2, line 52.

That night we had a great spread, with buffalo tongue as the *pièce de résistance*, to say nothing of a bottle of champagne.

My squint-eyed Masai made me a very good shield out of the hide, and I gave him a pair of old dancing gloves with which at first he was inordinately pleased. They were about three sizes too large, but he drew them on with quite the air of a young lady going to her first ball, and paraded the camp for the next hour, shaking hands with every one whom he met. Then for some unknown reason he suspected them of being a new species of handcuff, and anxiously inquired if I had given them to him preparatory to a visit to the gaol, finishing up with the request that he might be allowed to take them off. I told him he might, and carefully wrapped up in a piece of cloth he wore them round his sword-belt until we parted.

The Monday following the death of my buffalo we left this camp. The evening before I strolled to the top of the ridge behind our tents, and there witnessed one of the most beautiful sunsets it has ever been my lot to look upon. Something of the

sort Kipling must have had in mind when he wrote of "great spaces washed with sun." In the foreground a herd of zebra were quietly feeding. Behind them the ground sloped, gently at first and then in an abrupt dip to the outlying thickets of the huge juniper forest which stretched almost as far as the eye could reach. To the right the Aberdares threw a great mass of blue and gold, yellow and green, into the evening sky and then crept silently into the sombre leafy depths which lay below.

Beyond the zebra, the grasses, the evensong of the birds and the forest itself, beyond the bright green streaks of plain telling of the welcome rains and the herds of cattle whose units I could even at that distance distinguish, rose Kenia. Who, I wonder, has ever done justice through the sober medium of prose to that portion broken from the heavens and cast down upon the earth which we call a mountain? I suppose that one must know the hills from childhood to feel the thrill which comes to a highlander at the sight of such an one as Kenia. Sheer from the plain it rose. The evening sky shot with every delicate shade of pink flamed behind, flushed here and there with the deeper stain of some forest fire whose pall of smoke floated in strange forms above the horizon. Every colour and shade it is possible to imagine glowed on its southern slopes, whilst the northern contour faded away into deepest indigo. Blue and green rose its delicate lines leading the eye ever upward until they culminated in the snow-capped summit poised in

glowing purity as a thing apart. To no man can any country, however fair, stand in the same relation as his native land. Its woods may be clothed in lovelier shades of green, its plains stretch limitless on every hand. The water in its streams may run with a clearer lustre, and its hills raise higher tops toward the heavens. It is all in vain. The wanderer gazes at it, his depths unmoved, and turns to humbler scenes about which some fond association lingers, with the greeting he would give to a dearly loved friend. So I thought as I stood there. And yet one element it held which beautiful Nature always gives to a worshipper, something of that Peace which the world cannot give.

As I looked, for some reason which I cannot quite explain, I went back to the days of my boyhood, when my greatest joy was to sit at my mother's knee and to listen entranced to the doings of Tom and the Water Babies; when never even in my dreams did the Princess come with a half-smile playing about her lips to trouble me, and the world seemed to lie within the wooded slopes of a little Highland glen.

CHAPTER XIII

BRITISH EAST AFRICA (*continued*)

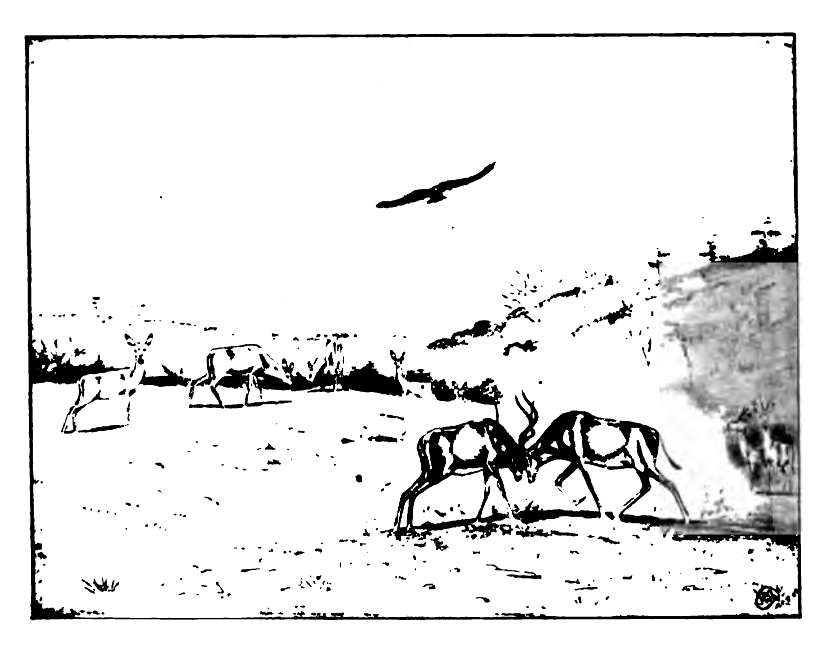
We only stayed one night in Rumuruti on our way back, as we were anxious to get on, now that we each had a buffalo, to try for an elephant on the slopes of Kenia. So, having finished the Commissioner's stock of beer—and never was beer more appreciated—we moved on and camped on the banks of a muddy little stream.

There were some rhino about, and I was twice deluded into the belief that I was going to get one. The first time, I thought a black stone in the middle of the plain was one of these big brutes asleep. On the second occasion, I saw something dark moving slowly along behind a ridge covered with burnt thorn scrub. Putting solids into both the rifles, we cautiously advanced, only to discover that the dark object was the back of an old cock ostrich! A hen was with him, and they went scudding off across the plain sending up little puffs of dust from their great feet. They have a distinctly coquettish look when going fast, and with their absurdly scraggy necks waggling stupidly from side to side look rather like an old and severe spinster clad in rusty black, doing a hundred yards with uplifted skirts showing an indecent amount of leg.





Impala about to Run



Impala Fighting

There was a swamp close by, and I saw four or five small impala bucks fighting. They were all immature, so somewhat carelessly I paid but little attention to them. On getting round some rocks I discovered a biggish herd with at least four good bucks. I had three stalks after them, but they were very much on the alert and I could not get a shot. Burton turned up unexpectedly, and as he had not got an impala, followed them up. He had a shot, and on reaching camp found that he had dropped his sight protector, and sent a Masai back to get it. This man came in later, having found it and also a buck, which Burton had wounded. He killed it with his knobkerrie. The head was a nice one, 27 inches long, but rather narrow. Impala are the most beautiful and at the same time by far the most wary of the antelope to be met with in East Africa. Here also they grow finer heads than in any other part of the continent. In colour they closely resemble a roe. There is a black line on each side of the white rump which gives them a very smart appearance. Usually one finds impala in herds whose number varies from half-a-dozen to twenty or thirty. On one occasion I came across a buck accompanied by at least sixty does. As a general rule there is a master buck, one or two smaller males, and the rest of the party does and young beasts. Bachelor parties vary considerably. I have seen as many as fourteen bucks together; nor can I agree with Captain Dickinson that in such a case they are all young beasts. I tried hard to get a shot in this particular

instance as the leader was the best buck I ever saw. His horns must have measured well over 28 inches, and there were three others nearly as good. I found these bachelor parties much more difficult to stalk than a mixed herd. In the latter case the buck trusts largely to the keen sight of his harem. In the former each individual is very much on the alert.

When alarmed, the does bark like a red deer hind, though I never heard the buck make a similar sound. It is a beautiful sight to watch impala suddenly alarmed. They bunch together and then go off in a series of bounding leaps, eight or nine feet from the ground. After a quarter of a mile or so, they settle down to a canter and eventually a walk. If undisturbed they will start feeding again. It is always worth one's while to follow these antelope up if there is a good head in the herd. They may move on to good stalking ground and, unless *thoroughly* alarmed, will not make a real bolt for it at once. They always keep near water, and "the narrow strip of herbage" on either side of a river-bank is generally a safe draw.

I found it very hard to judge an impala head correctly. The horns are foreshortened when the animal is facing one, but a head which curves outward at the tips and at the same time looks big is pretty certain to be good. For the same reason I think a water-buck's head is very misleading. The horns slope back, and in the case of the Defassa curve forward also, which makes them very decep-

tive. Owing to this foreshortening of the horns and the large size of the animal they nearly always look smaller than they really are. Impala are keen fighters, and the clash of their horns may be heard at some distance. I came on two bucks going for each other hammer and tongs one day, near the Tana. The heads east of Nyeri are not so good as those towards Rumuruti and the Guaso-Nyiro, and I had no desire to kill any more, so stood and watched them. They seemed to get their horns interlocked and then shoved for all they were worth. My view was much obstructed by thick bushes, but it certainly seemed to me that one of the bucks was slashing with his sharp little hoof at the other's head, but I have only my own sight to rely on for this statement. It is useless to attempt to discover anything about the habits of an animal from a native unless one can talk his language. Unfortunately I could not stop to watch these two so long as I should have liked. I was after other game, which, by the way, successfully eluded me and I had to disturb them. Their sight is extremely good, and they do not take long to make up their minds to go when once they are quite certain that there is danger about. Until thoroughly alarmed they keep pottering along just out of range, after their first series of big jumps.

I only once saw a solitary buck. He had a very fair head but nothing unusual. They frequent country partially covered with bush, and seem to

lose their heads if driven right out into the open. Impala sometimes scatter when alarmed, and if the herd is a big one, it is hard to tell where the buck has gone. They always reunite afterwards. A buck with does will usually but not invariably come last.

Ten impala are allowed to be killed on a licence, and it leaves a good margin. Six is enough really, unless one sees exceptionally good heads afterwards. Hartebeest are also limited to ten, though but few sportsmen fortunately are filled with so great a desire for their blood as was one gentleman. Shortly after leaving Nairobi he killed his limit, though he could not get near less plentiful and wilder species of game. He put in a petition asking to be allowed to kill ten more. This was, I believe, granted, though he had to pay for them. When, however, a week later, a second petition arrived, the authorities began to be afraid that he would spend the rest of his life murdering hartebeest, and sent back a reply that he might kill an unlimited number, but that in future the price of hartebeest would be raised to R.1000 per head. No more petitions came in after that!

We moved camp after we had remained near this muddy stream for a couple of days, and went on to a river called the Sugari. I saw but little game the first day out. Some "Tommy" mothers with their dear little fawns made beautiful pictures. A native caught one of these tiny creatures alive when we were at Rumuruti and tried to sell it to us, but

we made him take it back, though it was very fascinating.

Whilst in this camp we had some heavy rain. I never fully realised before the meaning of the verse: "Thou sendest a gracious rain upon the earth, and refreshedst it when it was weary." The ground revived like a living thing and smelt deliciously clean and fragrant; whilst between the showers, sky and hills held the most lovely indigo-blue tints. When the rain first began it was hard to see the young grass, though in the distance one could detect a faint shimmer of green. A few days later, as though by magic, the whole country was clad in a mantle of green, on which the herds of game, and sheep and cattle pastured royally. The word by which the Masai designate their ruling spirit is the same word as that which means rain; it is easy to follow the connection. The Masai guide their flocks by whistling, the shepherd being usually a picturesque-looking figure armed with a long spear.

The Sugari flowed through a big swamp. I went down its edge on the first evening we camped there with Hassan and a new Masai guide. The other guides had left us at Rumuruti. This man was a good-looking fellow, but with about as much idea of hunting as a guinea-pig. He walked straight out into the middle of a plain covered with dried grass, stunted mimosas, and horrible loose stones, and never went near the swamp until I made him. We had not been there a minute when two large

wart-hogs jumped up. I had a snap but missed. I particularly wanted a good pair of tushes, but though I twice wounded a boar I never obtained one all the time I was in Africa. But that is always the way! Whilst following these wart-hogs we moved three impala, one a good buck. They made off up the hill. I followed, and marked them slowly moving along the ridge just out of sight of a little valley. I doubled back down the hill and came up on the crest at the spot where I thought they would be passing. I had hit it off a little bit too well, for I came bang on top of them at about five yards distance. A bush was between us, and they were not long in realising their danger. The big buck stopped some distance off. I could just see him through the trees and in despair took a shot. It was pouring with rain, and the wind right in my face. I had very little hope but to my joy heard the bullet smack, though he went on. However, I got up to him all right and we had impala steak for dinner. His head was one of the best I got.

The river wound through the most delightful little dells and glades, thickly covered with white convolvuli and other flowers. Wide-spreading mimosas gorgeous with some flaming red parasite whose name I did not know gave another splendid touch of colour. Close to the river we found a zebra which had been killed a few hours previously by a lion. Its hindquarters were torn asunder, its eyes gone, and alto-

gether it was not a pretty sight. The nose was unharmed, and its neck, as far as I could make out, unbroken, though I believe a lion usually kills its prey by smashing the vertebræ. We followed the lion's tracks for about a mile, and then lost them in the swamp, so determined to come back early the following morning.

At dawn we were off. The sky was clear at first but to the north heavy with sullen clouds. The bushes looked fresh and sparkling in the morning sun, and though the ground was not wet it was soft enough to ball unpleasantly, like snow. After a mile or so we went, with a sudden transition, from bright light and blue sky into thick mist. Hyænas with their noisy lumbering gait moved off into the shadows, clumsily and yet with some indefinable reminiscence of a horse in their action. It was a land of ghouls and misshapen monsters. The trees were twisted into strange and distorted shapes; the very ground itself seemed to shun our footsteps. The mist beat against our faces in damp, pulseless waves which even the African sun, a faint blue saucer through its intangible folds, could do nothing to pierce. Cobwebs, torn or perfect, hung from the grasses and festooned the sharp spikes of the mimosa thorns. Something big and dark and loathsome flapped up as we drew near the carcase; from its muddied remains foul winged shapes disentangled themselves. Others peered back with twisted naked heads. A dozen marabouts, their

sanctimonious appearance merely a cloak for their disgusting predilections, veritable wolves in sheep's clothing, stalked solemnly and sedately up the hill. Despite their curiously precise and pedantic air, a lurking furtiveness hung about them. I fancied I heard them muttering to each other, "Disgraceful behaviour!" "Unseemly interruption!" I am sure that if speech had been suddenly conferred on them, they would have answered somewhat after this manner: "It is quite true, my dear sir, that appearances are against us, but I can assure you that you only find us near this loathsome piece of offal by the merest chance. Noticing a number of those disgusting vultures about, we ventured to approach in order to discover the meaning of their presence. A horrid scene, as you so truly observe. Ugh! Allow us to wish you a very good morning!"

The zebra had been picked clean, but not by a lion. He had never been near it again. Have I not already said that my dreams were unrealised and that I never got one? It is always the unattainable and unattained which we most desire. The salmon we lost was always the biggest; the stag over the march ever carried the finest head; the young lady whose card was full up was surely the most beautiful! So it always has been, so it always will be, so long as human nature is human nature.

I found Burton had got a very beautiful impala on my return to camp. If my memory serves me

right, it carried 28-inch horns with a span of 23 inches. I had not as yet shot a water-buck, and Burton having seen one in the swamp not far distant, I went there the following day in the hope of getting a shot. We found him all right, feeding with seven or eight does in an opening in the reeds the other side of a small stream. The wind was very tricky, the reeds too tall to shoot over, so we crawled up to within thirty yards and waited. Two cow eland joined them after a quarter of an hour; then unfortunately a doe got our wind. The buck showed through a bush for a brief second and dashed straight into the swamp. I had a snap at his retreating form with no effect. After some difficulty we got across the stream, and entered a thick patch of tall growth about eight feet high, smelling strongly of mint. After forty yards of this, we came to rushes, water, and the beginning of the swamp. Just as we reached it there came a lumbering crash from just ahead. It was no water-buck, and knowing that it could be only one thing—a buffalo—I remembered that I wanted a smoke very badly and cleared out!

On our way back we came on a fine spectacle. Without any warning, the ground suddenly dropped into a ravine about a hundred and fifty feet deep and a couple of hundred yards across. A stream murmured along between banks as green and fresh as those in an English park, while huge mimosas spread their graceful boughs above, covered with scarlet fungi. Quietly feeding along the bottom,

or clustered in groups within the welcome shade, were some seventy eland. I afterwards discovered a salt lick near, which they visited every day. The bull had a nice head, but I already had one, so left him in peace. Lower down this ravine we came on a troop of monkeys and a small herd of impala. Along the borders of the swamp I saw any amount of duck and snipe. The latter, I fancy, are a good deal larger than an English bird, though I never shot one.

It was on 2nd April that I first came to close quarters with a rhino. About a mile from camp, as we followed the course of the river, great excitement was manifested by the porters. I caught the word "rhino" from Hassan, and thinking that we were going to be charged, jumped off my pony and hastily shoved a couple of solids into the rifle. I then discovered that the animal they had seen was quite a quarter of a mile away, going over the sky-line. We were at the bottom of the same ravine in which I had seen the eland, though about a mile from that spot. On reaching the top, we could see nothing, though big footprints in the soft earth proved that the men had not been deceived. We followed the footprints for a mile or so across the plain, and then in some straggling mimosa scrub discovered our beast. It is no difficult matter to pass a rhino by within a few hundred yards, even on ground of this kind. They blend in wonderfully with their surroundings despite their huge bulk. In strong sunlight they may look almost any colour from black to bluey grey,



Head of Rhinoceros (*Female*)



Hassan with a Waterbuck (*Defassa*)

but in cloudy weather they at times have quite a brownish tinge. She (for it was a cow) was on the alert, but we managed with the aid of various trees to get up to within seventy yards, though it took us quite three-quarters of an hour to cover the last two hundred. She moved uneasily round a small mimosa, but at last exposed her shoulder and I fired. She ran forward evidently badly crippled, but a few minutes later turned towards where we lay and another shot killed her. A sketch of her head appears opposite.

The next day we cleaned the head and on the following morning moved camp to the Engobit River, an easy day's march. Here we were visited by a number of Masai who came in from a neighbouring village. They were fine-looking men, and as easily entertained as children. A looking-glass kept them amused for a long time, and the click of a camera shutter sent them into convulsions. I was doing a drawing of a family party of rhinos, in which they were immensely interested. Burton tried to snap them while they were watching, but as soon as they saw what he was after they bolted like rabbits and hid behind a tree, from which nothing would induce them to stir. They had daubed their faces with streaks of ochre. One old gentleman had a large white patch over one eye, and might have been first cousin to the great "White-eyed Kaffir." He had some curious ivory ear ornaments made of hippos' tusks.

The following day we left this camp, meaning to

get to Nyeri; but on the way Burton fell in with a rhino. He surprised it behind a bush, and the rhino, not appreciating the disturbance, hesitated for some minutes as to whether or no he should clear out. He who hesitates is lost. Burton's gun-bearer arrived with a ·450 and the rhino departed to the happy hunting-grounds, where perhaps he will be left in peace. He had a good horn, twenty-five inches long, though rather thin. This delayed us as the head had to be cleaned, and we camped on our old ground where I shot my first Jackson.

It was very wet the next day, but I came across some water-buck standing on the edge of a gully covered with bush. A good buck was standing quietly watching us, and as I knew he would most certainly disappear before I could get across the gully, I had to take the shot from where I was. There was a convenient tree half-way down one side, so leaving Hassan in full view to occupy his attention, I slipped down behind the trunk and managed to get him.

The man with the pony had disappeared, and I pictured a dismal walk into Nyeri with two rifles to carry, while Hassan looked after the head. Fortunately my shot was heard; the syce turned up, and I got comfortably in about 1.30. With the Old Pioneer and the commander of the military forces at Nyeri, we felt among old friends, and I shall not readily forget the dinner which celebrated our return; nor the week which we spent with our hospitable



A FAMILY PARTY!

hosts. It was one of the most delightful times of the whole trip and I was very sorry to leave.

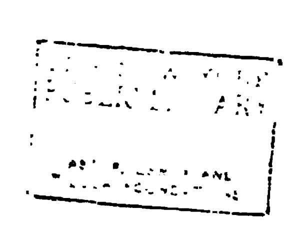
A large number of Wa Kikuyu came in during our stay in order to hold a *shauri* with Mr. Lane, the Provincial Commissioner, whom, with Mrs. Lane, we had afterwards to thank for much kind hospitality at Fort Hall. I cannot speak with sufficient gratitude of all the kindness we received from the various officials we met during our stay in East Africa. They one and all did everything in their power to make us at home and to give us a good time. They certainly succeeded, and though but "a ship which passed in the night," I felt that I was leaving old friends and parted from many with feelings of genuine regret.

I was very keen to get a good bushbuck, and though the Old Pioneer and his companions had almost entirely de-bushbucked the surrounding country, the former gentleman put me on to a place where he thought there might be a good head. I went there early one morning, with no result. That evening we went out together and sat down by the river to watch. A river bank with open flats covered with long grass and scattered bushes is an ideal place for these little antelope. Bushbuck stalking is not unlike roe stalking. They favour the same type of country, and when after them in the early mornings at Nyeri I used to think of a certain hillside, purple with heather and scattered with silver-stemmed birches, where I have stalked many a roebuck.

They are very retiring little animals, and only

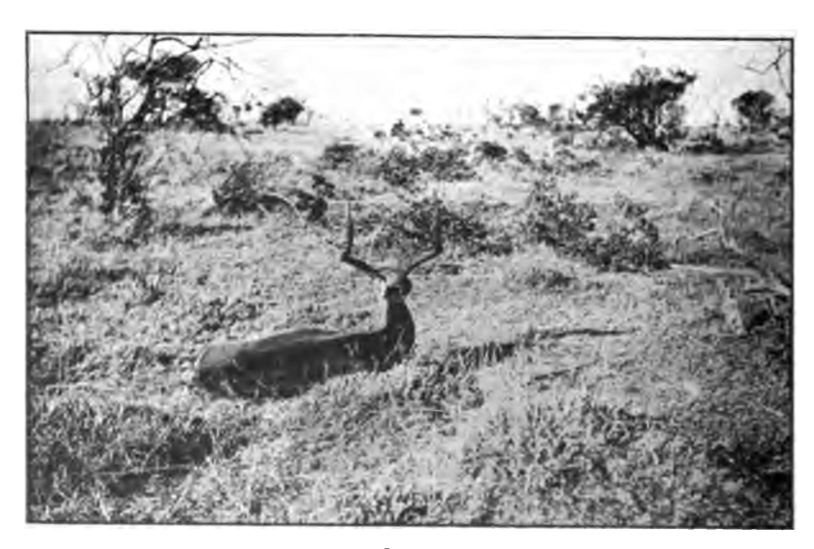
come out to feed in the early morning and late evening. Almost with the first streaks of dawn they go back to the bush, emerging from its recesses again about four o'clock in the afternoon. They move about among low cover, never going very far from one spot, and often feeding within a circle of a few yards. They have a rather secretive air, and keep in whatever cover there may happen to be as much as possible. Not infrequently they make nasty charges when wounded, and their sharp horns are by no means to be despised. A wounded buck of any kind takes a lot more to knock him out than a stag. A well-known American hunter told me he shot a water-buck with a small-bore rifle, and, as he thought, killed him dead. On going up to him, however, the buck jumped to his feet, knocked him down and stamped on his prostrate form with his sharp hooves, permanently injuring his leg.

After waiting some time we saw a bushbuck come out, but his head looked small. He disappeared in a thicket, and presently another and better buck appeared. He walked straight into the bushes, however, and never showed again. Just as it was getting dark the first one reappeared and I fired at him across the river. He gave a bound and vanished. I waded across the river, and just as I had given up hope found him lying dead in some long grass. His head was not good for the district, but quite respectable. The Old Pioneer had shot a beauty a few weeks before, 17½ inches in length.





A KIKUYU WARRIOR AND DEAD BUSHBUCK



AN IMPALA

A day or so before leaving Nyeri I had a great time with another of these animals. We had marked him down and were getting close to the spot, above a steep bank overhanging the river, from which I hoped to get a shot, when a slight puff of wind at my back warned me that there was no time to be lost. I reached the top of the bank and saw the buck making off into some fearfully thick bush. I had a hasty shot and hit him, for it was all he could do to avoid falling into the river. The bank, as I have said, was nearly perpendicular, and from the outside it seemed that a rabbit could hardly have crawled through the bush, let alone an animal the size of a bushbuck. However, where a bushbuck could go, we could follow, and for the next hour we followed a good blood trail through impenetrable thorns and creepers. I heartily wished I had never touched him before we were done. Going down a buffalo trail was Piccadilly compared to it. We heard him twice and found where he had stopped to rest. Finally he jumped into the river, where we got him.

The same evening the Assistant Deputy-Commissioner having finished his arduous duties early, we went out together and killed a fair water-buck. Before starting I heard a long conversation taking place between him and his general domestic, a small boy aged about twelve. I got it translated after. This was how it went.

The Boy. "Is the Bwana going shooting?"

The A.D.C. "Yes!"

The Boy. "Is the Bwana going with the great fierce bearded one?" (Me—flattering, wasn't it?)

The A.D.C. "Yes."

The Boy (anxiously). "I hope the Bwana will take care!"

Moral. Shave! Which I did.

The next day was Sunday. The A.D.C. took me over to see a chief he had to interview about some land dispute. The opposing party did not turn up so he had his ride for nothing, but it was very enjoyable to me all the same. We followed the river most of the way, and saw a lot of duck and geese. There were some jolly little brown birds, exactly like miniature pheasants when flying at a distance, and a larger black variety with red heads and long tails which seemed to over-weight them and gave them the appearance of huge tadpoles suddenly gifted with the power of flight. A little buzzing cloud of insects hummed everlastingly between the ponies' ears. They reminded me of those water jets on which a cork is perpetually kept bouncing and spinning. Like a living spray they dissolved, re-collected, shot into the air, and again dissolved.

Korazi, the chief, sent his small brother to meet us. He was a fine little chap and kept up with the ponies well. On reaching the boma we were given *tembo*, a native drink made of fermented millet. In taste it was not unpleasant, though I should not care for it often; but I drew the line at honey which Korazi

fished up with his fingers out of a calabash and wanted to mix with it.

The next day, in obedience to an order from headquarters, the Commander-in-Chief evacuated Nyeri and his beloved flagstaff! It was a most impressive spectacle, with a band of two buglers and the police presenting arms! We had to leave too, and sorry I was to go. It took us a couple of days to get into Fort Hall, where we found a mail waiting for us, and also the latest lion story. At Nairobi had been recently celebrated a wedding. When certain of the guests had eaten and drunken until they were well filled, they adjourned outside for a little amusement. Nearly all had weapons of some sort, and the conversation turned on lions. One gentleman, who had certainly looked on the wine when it was red, and caught some of its reflected hues, went down on his hands and knees and began playfully to growl. Another levelled a rifle at him—No, dear reader, you are not going to be shocked by a dreadful tragedy; the rifle did not go off—when to his horror, behind the inebriated impersonator of the king of beasts he saw a real lion, crouching ready for a spring. Happily all ended well and the lion was killed; but it will be a long time before that gentleman plays at lions again.

We intended to go on to Kenia first to try for elephants and then move down to the Tana in hope of a lion. We were in need of various things not obtainable in Fort Hall, so sent a runner into Nairobi

and waited for his return. It was just as well we did so, as Burton got laid up. The morning after our arrival a party of Wa Kikuyu turned up bedaubed with white paint and wearing feather head-dresses. They made the most horrible noises and performed a kind of dance. Many of them had small wooden shields on their arms, and carried long sticks from which hung strips of skin covered with the long hair of the colobus monkey. The Masai and Wa Kikuyu youths are circumcised at the age of nineteen. The ceremony takes place once a year, and is followed by an elaborate dance. The party who visited Fort Hall were on their way to take part in these rites. Hence their costume.

We had discovered that the one thing wanting to complete our happiness was a little music in the evenings, so Burton with his usual kindness of heart had ordered a gramophone. A few days later it arrived. We rushed at the box, one of us fixed up the machine whilst the other unearthed "Vilia," to be succeeded by "Tobermory." Everything was ready, the Commissioner was panting with excitement—when we discovered that the sound box had been forgotten. However, two days later it arrived and Harry Lauder's inimitable voice delighted our hearts.

It was much warmer at Fort Hall than in the highlands of Rumuruti and Nyeri, being 2000 feet lower in altitude. There I slept under four thicknesses of blanket, whilst at Fort Hall one was ample.

Burton being quite recovered, on 23rd April we

set out for Embu. It was a two days' march, and on the first evening we camped by a Wa Kikuyu village. We gave a concert in the evening which pleased our guests enormously. "Tobermory" was easily first favourite but Harry Lauder was always popular. They thought the Toreador song from "Carmen" very amusing, and roared with laughter at the top notes! The next day opened with a nasty drizzling rain which at intervals broke into heavy showers. About noon we reached Embu. It is, like all other stations, perched on a hill-top flanked by a deep ravine, the *raison d'être* of course being the river at the bottom. It consists of a narrow line of stone buildings fronted by flower beds and the usual beehive cluster of huts laid out in orderly lines. Mr. Phillips, of the K.A.R.'s, welcomed us as though we were old friends, and that evening we dined with him. The talk turned on game, as was inevitable. He told us that lately he had found two dead hartebeest which had been killed by lions on the Tana plains. He followed the tracks of the latter animals and found a young, partly grown lion-cub dead, with its head smashed in. The shikari's explanation was that one of the parents, the mother, had killed it because "it wouldn't carry its share of the meat!" Rather a Spartan mode of discipline!

The gramophone, of course, came on with the dessert, and a native sergeant coming in with his daily report was asked to stop. He stood stiffly at attention whilst we put on the never-failing "Tober-

mory," and so remained until the end of the first verse. Then came that infectious laugh. He gave a decorous smile, which promptly vanished behind an enormous black paw. "Mackay!" said Harry Lauder. The smile resolved itself into a gentlemanly snigger. "Mack-a-a-a-y!" reiterated the devil-possessed instrument. At that the last barriers went down. The snigger dissolved into a wild splutter of choking laughter which even the black paw could not successfully repress, and he incontinently bolted through the door and gave himself up to unrestrained mirth in the back yard.



Crossing a Native Bridge (*see page* 251)



Forest on Mount Kenia

CHAPTER XIV

BRITISH EAST AFRICA (*continued*)

As the season advances, from the thick forest which covers the slopes of Kenia bands of elephants move out and play havoc with the shambas which lie near. At times they wander far afield, and a short time before we reached Rumuruti four good elephants had been killed in the swamp close by. It was in the shambas that we hoped to get them, so sending the safari on ahead, we left Embu after lunch and camped that night, a long four hours' ride distant, on the fringe of the forest. A few natives came in to visit us, but no one seemed to know anything about elephants! One had been seen three weeks previously, but that was all! It was not a very promising outlook, and I started at dawn the next morning with no great expectations of sport.

A mile or so of shambas and banana patches brought us to the edge of the forest. It was a wonderful place. We plodded up through groves of magnolias and other flowering shrubs, with no sound to bear us company save the ceaseless, melancholy patter of the rain, and the drip, drip on the dark foliage which hemmed us in on all sides. Now and again the note of a bird came from the topmost

boughs of some huge tree, whose moss-covered limbs were hung with trailing lianas and clusters of fern. An occasional gleam of sunshine speckled the mouldering leaves which strewed the ground with strange yellow patterns. Little red, blue, and white flowers peered timidly out from the surrounding green. Wonderful hot-house scents, overpowering in their strength, puffed fitfully in one's face.

> "Do you know the steaming stillness of the orchid-scented glade
> When the blazoned bird-winged butterflies flap through?"

The lines recurred continually to my mind.

Occasionally we came on the remains of some old Wa 'Ndorobo dwelling, hollowed out of the trunk of some enormous tree. Up, ever up, we went until the magnolias and evergreen shrubs began to give way to scattered clumps of bamboos. A broad beaten path wound through the long grasses which led to them, visible proof that elephants had been abroad. Thicker and thicker grew the bamboos until they extended into one vast, quivering sea of delicate leaves. Through the closely growing stems we made our laborious way, following, when practicable, the wide flattened highway which the elephants had left. Huge, round footprints showed plainly here and there; some, so Hassan said, made but a few hours previously. A rumble of distant thunder caught my ear and we all stood to listen. The rumble came again. Following it, a shrill trumpeting rang out and echoed among the bamboos. Then I knew that

it was no thunder that I heard, and that elephants were somewhere close at hand.

The track led us on to a space partially cleared. Long grasses grew about it, from which great trees reared themselves aloft, towering above even the bamboos, from which, as we listened, came another angry trumpet. A vast grey back slid slowly across the glade and vanished. So noiselessly did it come and go that I could hardly realise I had actually seen a wild elephant. The wind was bad, so we retraced our steps before trying to get round to the other side of our beasts. It was bad going, but we persevered, and presently heard elephants on either side of us, a few hundred yards distant. From every side came rumblings and little liquid gurglings, but the bamboos were so thick that one could not see ten yards. It was evident, from the noise, that we were in the middle of a large number of elephants, and when I thought that an accidental puff of wind, or some evil chance might send them crashing in a mad stampede over our defenceless bodies, I confess to feeling far from comfortable. I fancy that most men, despite any protestations made from an armchair in the gun-room, would find themselves looking into the future with some apprehension on the first occasion on which they came to close quarters with a herd of wild elephants in thick jungle. One begins to speculate on the amount of truth there may be in the assertion that the elephant is of a retiring disposition, and to wonder what may be the crushing power of his foot!

Through an occasional break in the tops of the bamboos we could see grey trunks curving up above the young shoots of bamboo, like huge sinuous snakes, and then disappearing into the green sea below. A Kikuyu shinned up a tree and made hasty signs that he could see three elephants.

I suggested a shot from the tree, feeling that I should be a good deal happier there than behind a clump of bamboos.

"Can you kill one dead a hundred yards off?" said Hassan.

I expressed some doubt on the point, and on we went.

The bamboos were cracking and crashing all around us.

The Kikuyu, who was a little in front, turned sharply, and dashed past us, nearly jobbing me in the ribs with his big spear. He got up his tree again, and chattered like a monkey. A crash and a heavy tread followed his disappearance. Then dead silence.

Hassan got behind a small shrub and I stood beside him. Opposite us rose huge clumps of bamboos. In the centre of these was a small opening, covering a dip in the ground. There came another crash, and a huge bulk seemed suddenly to heave itself out of the bowels of the earth and come towards us. My recollections of the next few minutes are, as may be imagined, somewhat confused. I knew the side shot was no good, for he was directly facing me. The soft, bulging top of the trunk above the eyes

drew my attention like a magnet. I fired, and the elephant fell on his knees. I saw two white sickles curving out from his jaw, and, taking a step forward, fired again behind his shoulder. He was exactly eight yards off, for I stepped it afterwards. Hassan fired one shot from the small-bore; then, and I am not in the least ashamed to say it, I ran like a rabbit. Hassan joined me directly, and after comparing notes we returned to the spot from which we had taken our shots. The porters had bolted, nor could I altogether blame them. They had taken my camera and eventually lost themselves, spent the night in the forest, and turned up the next morning. For a hundred yards or more there was no sign of blood. Then big red splashes and clots marked the elephant's track. For a long time these continued, and I knew from the colour of the blood and its frothy appearance that he was shot through the lungs. We had a long and tiring chase. One or two squealing cries broke the stillness of the forest, but they were not repeated. Then in some thick, marshy cover we lost the blood; it was late in the afternoon, so very reluctantly we resolved to leave him.

We got back to camp very late, to find that Burton had been out all day but had had no luck, though he had come across some fresh tracks.

In my tent I found a telegram awaiting me, which had been brought by a special runner. I will not dwell on the darkest hours of my life. My worst fears were realised the next day in a second cable.

As I could not get a boat until 12th May, we decided to go down to the Tana, and shoot there in preference to hanging about in Nairobi doing nothing.

I, of course, did not go back to Kenia again, but the natives subsequently found the elephant I had shot, which must have died almost immediately. His tusks were under the minimum weight—60 lbs.—so a stern government confiscated them, and I have nothing to show for the only elephant I ever killed. I am not grumbling at the regulation, which is perfectly sound; but it was bad luck.

After I left Africa, Burton returned to Kenia, and a day's march from our old camp secured a very good bull-elephant. He stayed in the forest for a fortnight hoping to get another, but luck did not again favour him.

On 27th April we left Embu at 7.30 A.M. I saw six or seven bushbuck does, one of them very dark in strong contrast to the bright red coats of the others, and with them a nice buck. They were feeding quietly amongst some reeds and pools in just such a place as one would expect a roe in Scotland. I had a rather tricky stalk, but finally got a shot at the buck as he climbed up a slope into some bushes and hit him low. The does did not know where the shot came from and stood still. Presently the buck came out of the bushes again, and with a second shot I broke his foreleg. He gave a spasmodic rush down the hill, when a third shot killed him. He had quite a nice head.

Burton joining me, we went on together and came

on a family of bush pig, which, however, eluded us. Whilst searching for them I turned a wart-hog down to Burton, who killed him.

On the bank of a stream, some way farther on, I heard some baboons making a great noise and found two more bush pig close by. I stalked them through very long wet grass and killed the sow, which was immediately charged by the boar. Their tushes are quite small. Hassan assumed an air of great disgust, and would not go near her while the other gun-bearer chopped out her tushes with a native sword.

There were very large numbers of hartebeest about, and, as we had no specimens of the Cokes variety, we killed several. The total bag for the day was five hartebeest, of which Burton had killed three, one bush pig, one wart-hog, and one bushbuck. We had had a long day and were both pretty done, when, at four o'clock, we got into camp by a muddy little swamp.

The next day we had another tiring walk, as we made a wide detour in order to avoid several flooded rivers. It was, comparatively speaking, an uninteresting march, and we saw no game at all. We passed a good many villages, but these ceased after we had crossed the confluence of three rivers spanned by a very rickety native suspension bridge hung on creepers.

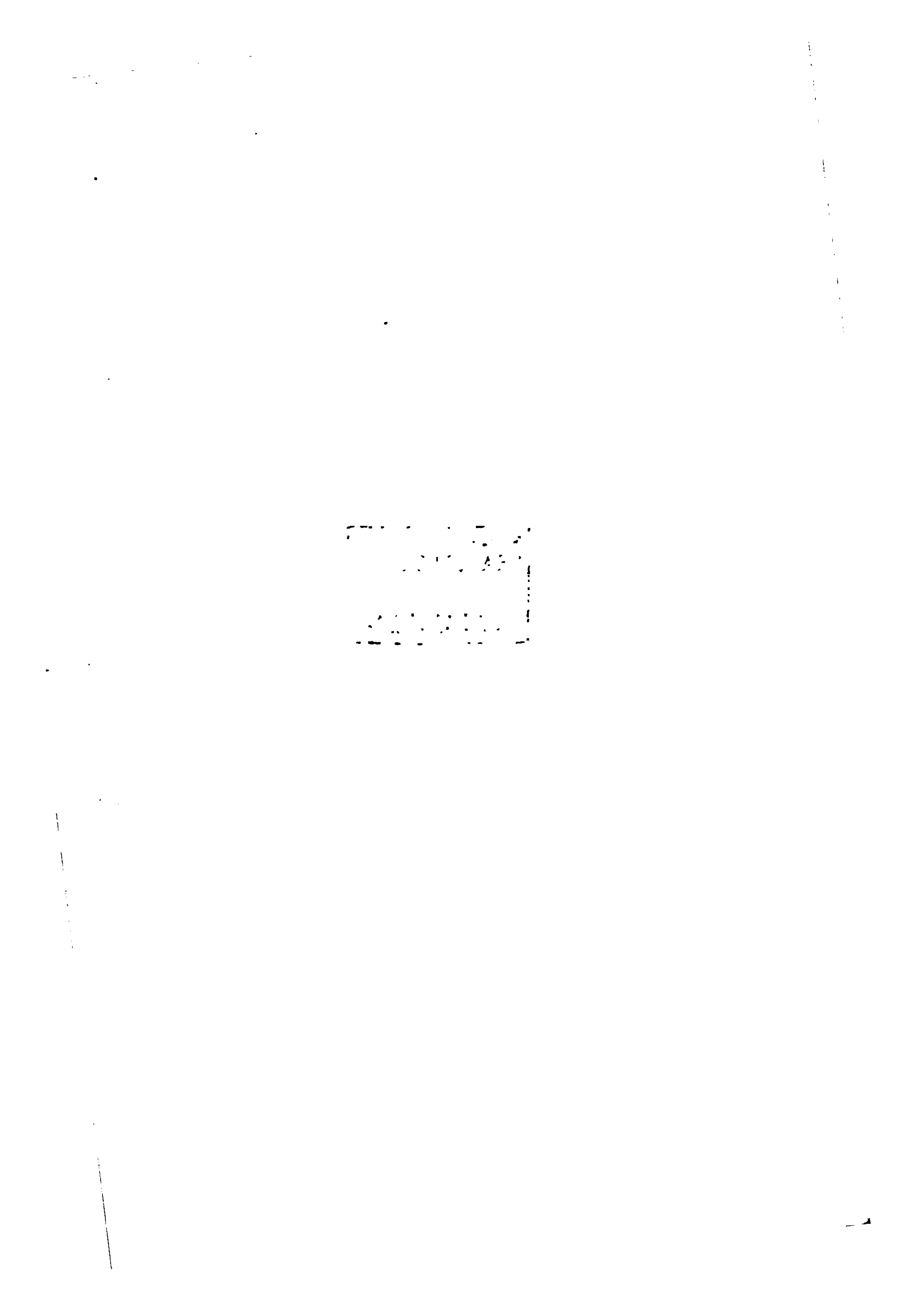
There were large numbers of beautiful little butterflies about, which looked like living pansies, though I do not know their name. Here and there

upon the path, spade-beetles, singly or in pairs, laboriously toiled. With painstaking care they rolled little compact balls. Then one, balancing himself on his forelegs, would place his hinder pair upon the ball, whilst his companion mounted on top in an attitude for all the world like that of the performing dogs one sees at a circus. He then, by his weight, gave an impetus to the tiny mass whilst his friend pedalled frantically. Thus they got it started, though how its movements were directed was always a mystery to me. We had a short rest on the way, and reached the Tana river about four o'clock in the afternoon.

There was a beautiful pool just below the camp, in which several hippopotami were disporting themselves. A little water wagtail preened himself on a branch after his evening bath, and half-a-dozen geese, showing but little fear, had placed themselves in a picturesque group at the water's edge. It was a peaceful scene, and I wondered as I looked why man's most deeply rooted instincts should prompt him to bring murder and sudden death into a picture from which he derived so much enjoyment.

I shot a goose, which we had for dinner the next day, but it was anything but appetising.

We went after the hippos the following morning. Two are allowed on each licence. There is very little sport in killing them. One shot at the back of the head, or sideways, close to the ear, finishes them off at once. Burton killed one which went rolling over in the rapid current, its little legs waving in a





A JACKSON'S HARTEBEEST (*see page* 211)



RETRIEVING A HIPPO

grotesquely pathetic fashion, as it was hurried down by the rush of water.

I shot a second one, which vanished in swirls of reddened foam. It reappeared a few yards lower down, wobbled uneasily for a little, and then remained stuck on a mudbank.

The animal Burton had killed was carried for nearly a mile down the river, and could be seen underneath the opposite bank. The river was much too deep and swift for it to be retrieved, and after trying the depth of water and wandering disconsolately up the bank we had to give it up as a bad job. Mine was fast where we had left it, and as there was an opportune spit, composed of rocks and sand, which ran out almost to where it was lying, we had a comparatively easy task to rescue it. I say we, though I had but little to do with it myself, beyond standing on the bank and taking photographs. Burton, being seized with a sudden and violent desire to get thoroughly wet, waded out with Hassan and a string of porters. He then tied a rope round the hippo's creasy neck.

Whilst they were so engaged another hippo appeared in the pool above them and I anticipated some fun, but he vanished somewhere up-stream and we never saw him again. It took nearly three hours to get my victim in to the bank, and once there I hastily returned to camp as essence of hippo is not a scent for which one hankers!

Whilst skinning her (for it was a cow) two arrow

heads were found embedded in the hide. The natives kill both hippo and rhino by this method, though it is not a job I should care to take on myself, in spite of the fact that I know of one man who killed a rhinoceros with a ·380 revolver and a single bullet!

I was writing in my tent that evening when I heard a commotion outside, and Burton yelled to me to bring a rifle. I rushed out, and found him stalking a large green crocodile lying on an islet opposite the camp. Before he could get a shot the noise made by the porters frightened him off. A few minutes after, Burton having gone off on his own account, a porter came up and told me he had found one close by. I went with him and found another big green brute lying among some rushes in the middle of the river. His head was turned away from us, so I could not get at the vital spot just behind the skull. Though hard hit he slid off into the river. Unless these horrible brutes are paralysed by the first shot it is almost impossible to recover them.

A horrible smell, originally attributed to hartebeest skulls, which had pervaded the camp for two days, was traced to the skin of my bush pig; so the skin disappeared into the river and the smell went with it.

We had no ponies with us, having sent them back to Fort Hall from Embu on account of the "fly." It was, of course, much harder work without them. We had been told it was an easy three days' march to Fort Hall by the route we intended to take, but



THE ODOL SMILE



AN ELEPHANT'S SKULL DECORATED WITH TWIGS

The natives place them there as a mark of respect to the dead beast

it turned out, instead, to be a long five. Every native we met disagreed as to the distance, and doubtless if we had been able to take our own time we should have had better sport. As it was we had to rush things very much.

We only stayed one day in the camp by the hippo pool, and the following morning started off at 5.30 down the Tana. We saw a large number of water-buck (*ellipsiprymnus*) when once clear of the thick bush which hampered us considerably to start with.

We fell in with some zebra also, and as I wanted a skin and had not as yet got one, I had a shot. The animal at which I fired reared straight up on end, pawing madly, then moved slowly off. I followed him and had another shot, when a water-buck dashed past me out of some bushes. I missed him with my first bullet, but the second, by a lucky fluke, caught him behind the ear as he galloped past and rolled him over like a rabbit.

I only killed two zebra whilst I was in Africa. Though sometimes very annoying on account of their numbers and wide-awake proclivities, it is too much like shooting a pony to give one any feeling of pleasure. They are very good bait for lion, as I have already mentioned, but otherwise not much use unless their slayer has a loud taste in winter waistcoats!

After getting the water-buck the character of the country changed. The thick bush, which was getting oppressive, ceased, and its place was taken by rolling, partially timbered country cut up by small hills.

I found another nice water-buck and brought him down with a long shot. Burton's gun-bearer began shouting behind us, and, as I thought he had seen a lion, we ran back. It was not a lion but a rhino, and by the time we had got back to where the water-buck had fallen he had picked himself up and made off; so we lost him. Burton went after the rhino and I after a water-buck, which I fancied was my wounded beast. He turned out, however, to be one of a party, and I managed to get a right and left at two fair heads.

Some impala appeared directly afterwards, but the buck had an ugly, narrow head, as had two others I subsequently saw; nothing like the fine heads we obtained farther north. The skin of my second water-buck had been badly scraped. There were some deep scratches on his flanks and several small holes about the size of bullet wounds in his neck, so he had probably escaped a lion.

Whilst the porters were skinning out the heads I heard some shooting, and on the ridge opposite saw a rhino charging about, and several porters running madly for the shelter of trees. The rhino disappeared (Burton afterwards killed him), and almost immediately my Kamba gun-bearer drew my attention to another of the great brutes moving up a hill six or seven hundred yards off. A second appeared at some little distance, and, as we moved out, on a small bare plateau a third strolled out of some bushes within a couple of hundred yards but vanished again directly.

A Wild Rhinoceros

I knew that the first one which we had seen carried the best horn, so we followed him. After half-an-hour's cautious walking through stunted bushes we climbed a low hill and found him lying on his side in some longish grass, dozing. It was hard to make out whether the dark object we could distinguish was really a rhino, but his twitching ear betrayed him. I was very anxious to get a good photograph, and as the occasion seemed propitious settled a plan of campaign with Hassan.

We took up our position behind a small thorn-bush twenty-five or thirty yards from the sleeping animal. I had my camera, Hassan the ·450 and the other gun-bearer the ·275. A third man then proceeded to attract the attention of the slumbering leviathan. The first two stones went wide, but the third struck him fair and square on the flank. I was really rather sorry for the poor old chap! It was a rude awakening. He jumped up with an indignant snort, and I got an excellent snap as he turned. An enlargement of it appears opposite.

I gave Hassan the camera and took the ·450. The movement caught his attention, and whipping round on his short inadequate-looking legs he came for me in a manner which certainly looked like business. The first shot hit him in the shoulder at about twenty yards and evidently staggered him, but he came resolutely on. I fancy, from the guttural noises I heard coming from the depth of the bush, that Hassan thought I had forgotten the existence of

my second barrel. It would have been foolish to run any unnecessary risk, so I waited until he was ten yards off before firing again. Fortunately, he was at an angle, and the bullet, grazing his ear, entered his neck and brought him down with a crash. He made desperate efforts to rise, but soon lay still. He was very black and caked with mud, as he had been "soiling" in a pool which I afterwards discovered. Nearly all the rhino I saw here were quite red owing to the colour of the ground.

On our way to camp I saw two more rhino, which afterwards charged through the safari. Whisky and the cook, having some regard for our future comfort, got up trees; fortunately the gramophone was not damaged and all ended happily.

I saw a number of water-buck before reaching our destination, and a big herd of buffaloes right in the open. They numbered about seventy, with three or four good heads and one grand old bull bringing up the rear. I greatly regretted having already killed my beast, as this old bull was a very fine specimen.

As far as I remember our combined bag for this day comprised two rhinos, four water-buck, and a zebra.

The morrow, practically speaking, was my last day's hunting. We were up at 4.30, and shortly after breaking camp I killed a nice water-buck. He had several does with him, one of them being so light as to be almost an albino. Shortly after I saw a large herd of eland mixed up with numbers of harte-

beest and zebra. I must have seen nearly a couple of hundred eland during the course of the day, including several good bulls. Burton returned to the Tana after I had sailed and killed a good head on this very ground. The bulls seemed to vary from light fawn to very dark mouse colour.

We had a rather bad time that day altogether. I met Burton about two o'clock in the afternoon and we compared notes. The safari seemed to be lost, and thinking that they were behind, we fixed a site by the river on which to camp. There were a lot of hippopotami grunting and snorting close by. We went down and photographed them.

It subsequently appeared that the safari were on ahead, and we had to track them by their footprints. At length, about 5.30 we found Noah camped by a stagnant swamp. I was absolutely dead-beat, having been on the move for nearly twelve hours and with no food since breakfast. The water was very muddy, I was horribly thirsty, and foolishly ate a quantity of tinned fruit, the consequence being that I was violently ill in the night.

I saw twenty-three rhinos this day, nineteen of them being full-grown and one old bull having a good horn. They are not nearly such good specimens, however, as those obtained farther north. In the newly opened country round Meru, on the eastern side of Kenia, future sportsmen should obtain some fine horns.

The next morning I woke very early and heard

a lion roaring and moaning within a short distance of camp. I was feeling very shaky, and fancy I must have had a slight touch of sun, but about one o'clock reached the ferry over the Tana, within four miles of Fort Hall. The plain was swarming with hartebeest, and I shot one, the first and last animals I killed in Africa thus belonging to this ugly species of antelope.

A few days later we reached Nairobi. Before leaving I heard one amusing yarn. The hero was a certain traveller in boots. I met him subsequently at Mombasa, where in a green Tyrolean hat, he filled to his own satisfaction, at any rate, and that of a skittish German baroness of doubtful origin with a *penchant* for liqueurs, the rôle of a retired diplomat.

He had arrived in Africa quite prepared to find the main street of Nairobi swarming with game, with lions lying in wait at every corner. He was offensively full of bounce, and certain residents got decidedly sick of him.

A shooting party, having with them, amongst other impedimenta, a baby lion-cub which roamed about more or less at will, had passed through the town shortly before his arrival. The commercial traveller's great fear was lions. He was never tired of asking questions about them, their habits, method of seizing prey, &c.

One night in the bar he was pursuing his usual topic.

"I suppose," said he, "there are lions in the streets at night?"

"Oh! yes—swarms," he was assured.

"Really?" he continued. "Is it safe now? I heard a man got pulled out of his bed the other night!"

"Oh yes!" said some one, "but that was his own fault. He slept with his window open! I suppose you always have yours shut?"

His questioner admitted that he omitted no precautions, "for," he naïvely added, "I always keep my boots and socks on as well for fear of jiggers!"

This was too much for some of the audience, who left hurriedly.

The traveller continued his catechism.

"Are there any lions here now?" he went on, addressing the bar tender.

"Well, look here!" exclaimed that exasperated individual, "a lion walked across that tennis lawn last week in broad daylight!"

The gentleman who travelled in boots was plainly staggered.

"But—" he began feebly.

"Come and ask the boss, if you don't believe me!" argued the bar tender fiercely.

Yes, corroborated the boss, a lion had certainly walked across the tennis lawn last week. He had seen him with his own eyes. At that the "drummer" collapsed, and was escorted by a strong force to his bedroom. A delighted and appreciative audience heard him carefully shut and bolt the window, barricade the door, and throw himself with a sigh of

relief on the bed. He left the next day, but funnily enough, without hearing of the shooting party and the lion-cub!

And now my dream is over, and the past two years are numbered with those others which have gone down into the mists of time. To me they have brought many changes. It seems but last week that I watched the docks fade behind me in a thin drizzle of rain and set my face for the West. But it is a day that has gone, that can never be recalled. Still, I have my memories.

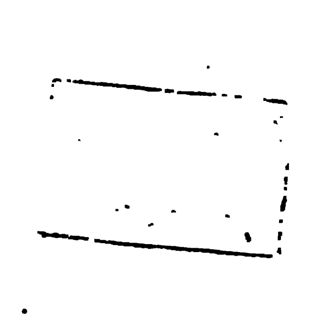
The Northern lights flicker palely over some fir-bound Canadian lake; my ram visits me, a pale ghost wandering with his band of ewes over the wide snow-covered spaces of Yarlakan. Peerless Fujiyama rises above the blue waters of Lake Hakone, and I move again among the glories of my beloved Nikko. The desolate sand dunes of Guardafui and the barren rocks of Aden lie blistering in the heat, but in spirit I pass them by and sit once more in the open doorway of my tent. About the clearing twinkle the lights of the camp fires and from the darkness beyond comes the cheerful music of the cicadas. The ceaseless murmur of the Tana is broken now and again by the heavy splash of some mighty animal; a horse stirs at his picket. Men's voices, low pitched, come and go in a fitful murmur. The clamorous clangour of the wild geese winging their way above the rushes is startlingly loud and clear. Occasionally a lion gives utterance to



A WA KIKUYU DANCE (*see page* 242)



THE END



a moaning roar; a hyæna yelps dolefully from the bushes. Beyond the river twinkles and winks the Southern Cross, here and on such a night its usually over-estimated beauty a thing to wonder at. Above all is the great purple vault of heaven studded with stars. Behind the low distant range of hills rises the yellow disc of the moon. It is all very quiet, peaceful, and immense, the only discordant note this infinitesimal throb of human life stirring in the great heart of Africa. Out somewhere in the darkness the Red Gods are watching and calling, always calling from behind the ranges. I can hear their Voices now. Shall I ever, I wonder, meet them at the trysting-place again?



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Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh & London

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OF THE SPORT
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TOUR OF THE
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